The Past Participle in English (complete lesson with examples)

In this lesson about the past participle in English we will see its formation and utilisation (ex: been, liked, played...)

What is the past participle?

Past participle indicates a past and finished action or moment.

How to make the past participle in English:

1. Regular verbs:

For regular English verbs, the past participle is formed by simply adding an 'ed' to the verbal base, or 'd' if the verb ends in the letter 'e'. This is why the past participle is also called "the ED form of verbs".

- live => lived
- seem => seemed
- enjoy => enjoyed
- pour => poured
- hope => hoped
- like => liked
- jump => jumped
- play => played
- paint => painted
- enter => entered

With a one-syllable verb, you must double the end consonant and add "ed":

- chat => chatted
- chop => chopped
- stop => stopped

Unless it ends in a -w, -x or -y:

- sew => sewed
- play => played
- fix => fixed

If the last syllable of a long verb is accented and ends with a consonant, it must be doubled:

- incur => incurred
- prefer => preferred
- travel => travelled

Be careful, when the verb ends with a consonant followed by a -y, you have to replace it by a -ied:

- try => tried
- marry => married
- fry => fried
- reply => replied

©Englishfornoobs.com
Finally, it is necessary to remember certain regular verbs that end in a way specific to the past participle:

- panic => panicked (c becomes -ck)
- free => freed
- dye => dyed

2. Irregular verbs:

For irregular verbs in the past participle: there is no real rule and you have to learn them by heart. A few examples:

- know => known
- arise => arisen
- catch => caught
- choose => chosen

It is sometimes possible that the irregular verb is identical to the verbal basis and the preterite, for example:

- cut (base form) => cut (preterite) => cut (past participle)
- hit (base form) => hit (preterite) => hit (past participle)

Or it is the same as the preterit:

- pay (base form) => paid (prétérit) => paid (past participle)
- bind (base form) => bound (prétérit) => bound (past participle)

When to use the past participle in English?

1. To form the passive voice in English:

- His room was well cleaned.
- My flight has been delayed because of the storm.
- He was injured in a car accident.
- This school was opened in 1993.

2. Past participle used as an adjective:

Past participles can be used as an adjective in front of a noun:

- I am bored.
- She feels tired today.
- It’s a stolen car.
- She was interested in the movie.
- Tom Cruise is a well-known actor.
- This house is abandoned.
- His toy is broken.

3. To form different verbal forms (past participle is in bold):

- Present perfect: I have learnt
- Present perfect progressif: I have been breaking
- Past perfect: I had learnt English
- Past perfect progressif: I have been learning
- Futur perfect: I will have learnt
- Futur perfect progressif: I will have been learning

©Englishfornoobs.com