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Grammar Reference

Use of the preterite

The **preterite** is used when:

- talking about **actions** or **completely finished events** that have no link to the present.
Example: We **spent three years** in Switzerland.
- talking about a **specific action in the past**. With **expressions** describing moments in the **past** such as yesterday, last month, ago..., the **preterite** is necessary.
Example: They **married** two years **ago**.
He **died in 1964**.
- talking about **past habits**.
Example: My grandfather **worked** on a farm.

Irregular verbs

Reminder: A **regular verb's simple preterite** and **past participle** are formed by adding **'-ed'** or **'-d'** to the verb's infinitive. If the verb ends with a consonant + **'-y'**, its **past participle** will end in **'-ied'**. When it ends in a vowel + consonant and the last syllable is stressed, the consonant is often doubled before adding **'-ed'**.

Example: to look → looked; to love → loved;
to try → tried; to stop → stopped.

However, there are also **irregular verbs** whose formations follow no such rules. Irregular verbs' various forms must be memorized.

The following are the main **irregular verbs**.

infinitive	preterite	past participle
to arise	arose	arisen
to be	was/were	been
to bear	bore	borne
to beat	beat	beaten
to become	became	become

infinitive	preterite	past participle
to begin	began	begun
to bend	bent	bent
to bet	bet/betted	bet/betted
to bind	bound	bound
to bite	bit	bitten
to bleed	bled	bled

infinitive	preterite	past participle
to blow	blew	blown
to break	broke	broken
to breed	bred	bred
to bring	brought	brought
to build	built	built
to burst	burst	burst

infinitive	preterite	past participle
to buy	bought	bought
to cast	cast	cast
to catch	caught	caught
to choose	chose	chosen
to cling	clung	clung
to come	came	come
infinitive	preterite	past participle
to cost	cost	cost
<i>to have a price of — not to be confused with 'to cost' ('costed'/'costed'), to establish the price of</i>		
to creep	crept	crept
to cut	cut	cut
to deal	dealt	dealt
infinitive	preterite	past participle
to dig	dug	dug
to dive	dove/dived	dived
to do	did	done
to draw	drew	drawn
to drink	drank	drunk
to drive	drove	driven

infinitive	preterite	past participle
to eat	ate	eaten
to fall	fell	fallen
to feed	fed	fed
to feel	felt	felt
to fight	fought	fought
to find	found	found
infinitive	preterite	past participle
to fit	fit/fitted	fitted
to flee	fled	fled
to fly	flew	flown
to forbid	forbade (/forbad)	forbidden
to foresee	foresaw	foreseen
to forget	forgot	forgotten
infinitive	preterite	past participle
to forgive	forgave	forgiven
to freeze	froze	frozen
to get	got	gotten/got
to give	gave	given
to go	went	gone
to grind	ground	ground

infinitive	preterite	past participle
to grow	grew	grown
to hang	hung	hung
<i>to suspend, to be suspended — not to be confused with 'to hang' ('hanged'/'hanged'), to execute by hanging, to be executed by hanging</i>		
to have	had	had
to hear	heard	heard
infinitive	preterite	past participle
to hide	hid	hidden/hid
to hit	hit	hit
to hold	held	held
to hurt	hurt	hurt
to keep	kept	kept
infinitive	preterite	past participle
to kneel	knelt/kneeled	knelt
to know	knew	known
to lay	laid	laid
to lead	led	led
to leave	left	left
to lend	lent	lent

infinitive	preterite	past participle
to let	let	let
to lie	lay	lain
<i>to rest, to be located, to be or become horizontal —</i>		
not to be confused with 'to lie' ('lied'/'lied'),		
<i>to tell a falsehood</i>		
to light	lit/lighted	lit/lighted
to lose	lost	lost
infinitive	preterite	past participle
to make	made	made
to mean	meant	meant
to meet	met	met
to mistake	mistook	mistaken
to mow	mowed	mown/mowed
to overcome	overcame	overcome
infinitive	preterite	past participle
to overtake	overtook	overtaken
to pay	paid	paid
to plead	pled/pleaded	pled/pleaded
to prove	proved	proven/proved
to put	put	put
to quit	quit/quitted	quit/quitted

infinitive	preterite	past participle
to read	read	read
to ride	rode	ridden
to ring	rang	rung
<i>to (cause to) sound out — not to be confused with 'to ring' ('ringed'/'ringed'), to encircle</i>		
to rise	rose	risen
to run	ran	run
infinitive	preterite	past participle
to say	said	said
to see	saw	seen
to seek	sought	sought
to sell	sold	sold
to send	sent	sent
to set	set	set
to sew	sewed	sewn/sewed
infinitive	preterite	past participle
to shake	shook	shaken
to shine	shone/shined	shone/shined
<i>to give off or reflect light — not to be confused with 'to shine' ('shined'/'shined'), to polish</i>		
to shoot	shot	shot
to show	showed	shown/showed
to shrink	shrank/shrunk	shrunk

infinitive	preterite	past participle
to shut	shut	shut
to sing	sang	sung
to sink	sank	sunk
to sit	sat	sat
to sleep	slept	slept
to slide	slid	slid
infinitive	preterite	past participle
to speak	spoke	spoken
to spend	spent	spent
to spin	spun	spun
to spit	spat/spit	spit/spat
to split	split	split
infinitive	preterite	past participle
to spread	spread	spread
to spring	sprang/sprung	sprung
to stand	stood	stood
to steal	stole	stolen
to stick	stuck	stuck

infinitive	preterite	past participle
to sting	stung	stung
to stink	stank/stunk	stunk
to stride	strode	stridden
to strike	struck	struck
to swear	swore	sworn
to sweat	sweat/sweated	sweated/sweat
infinitive	preterite	past participle
to sweep	swept	swept
to swell	swelled	swollen/swelled
to swim	swam	swum
to swing	swung	swung
to take	took	taken
to teach	taught	taught
infinitive	preterite	past participle
to tear	tore	torn
to tell	told	told
to think	thought	thought
to throw	threw	thrown
to thrust	thrust	thrust
to undergo	underwent	undergone
to understand	understood	understood

infinitive	preterite	past participle
to undertake	undertook	undertaken
to undo	undid	undone
to wake	woke/waked	woken/waked
to wear	wore	worn
to weave	wove	woven
<i>to interlace</i> — not to be confused with 'to weave' ('weaved'/'weaved'), <i>to follow a winding path</i>		
to weep	wept	wept
infinitive	preterite	past participle
to win	won	won
to wind	wound	wound
<i>to twist</i> — not to be confused with 'to wind' ('winded'/'winded'), <i>to cause to be out of breath</i>		
to withdraw	withdrew	withdrawn
to write	wrote	written

Note. The past participle of 'to get' is 'gotten' in various idioms and whenever 'to get' expresses obtainment or transformation.

Example: Have you **gotten** my e-mail?
She's **gotten** fat.
At last you've **gotten over** the first hurdle.
He's **gotten used** to it.

Percentages

- **Percentages** are expressed using **number** + '**%**' or '**percent**.'

Example: We've reduced the size by about **20%** (**percent**).

- When used as adjectives, **percentages precede** the **nouns** they modify.

Example: We'll have to pay a **40% deposit**.
It's **100% coverage**.