Regular & Irregular Verbs

A reference list for forming the past tense correctly

English verbs form the past tense two ways. **Regular verbs** just add **-ed** to the base form - predictable and easy once you know the pattern. **Irregular verbs** change in unpredictable ways and simply have to be memorized one by one. The irregular ones below are also the most common verbs in English, so they're worth learning early even though there's no shortcut.

Regular Verbs — add -ed

Rule: base form + **-ed**. If the verb ends in -e, just add -d (like → liked). If it ends in a consonant + y, change y to i and add -ed (study → studied). Short verbs ending in one vowel + one consonant often double the last letter (stop → stopped).

Verb	Past Simple	Example Sentence
work	worked	I worked from home yesterday.
watch	watched	We watched a movie last night.
cook	cooked	She cooked dinner for the family.
clean	cleaned	He cleaned the kitchen this morning.
study	studied	I studied English for two hours.
play	played	They played tennis on Saturday.
listen	listened	I listened to a podcast on the train.
finish	finished	She finished her report early.
start	started	The meeting started at nine.
stop	stopped	The rain stopped after lunch.
walk	walked	We walked to the station together.
talk	talked	I talked to my sister on the phone.
ask	asked	He asked a good question.
answer	answered	She answered every question correctly.
call	called	I called the office this morning.
live	lived	They lived in Berlin for three years.
like	liked	I liked the restaurant a lot.
love	loved	She loved her new job.
want	wanted	We wanted to leave early.
need	needed	I needed more time to finish.

plan	planned	We planned the trip together.
travel	traveled / travelled	They traveled around Europe last year.
visit	visited	I visited my parents last weekend.
arrive	arrived	The train arrived on time.
wait	waited	We waited twenty minutes for the bus.
try	tried	She tried the new recipe.
carry	carried	He carried the bags upstairs.
stay	stayed	We stayed at a small hotel.
open	opened	She opened the window.
close	closed	He closed the door quietly.

Irregular Verbs — no fixed pattern

Rule: there isn't one — these forms have to be memorized individually. They are also some of the most frequently used verbs in English, so you'll get a lot of practice with them naturally through conversation.

Verb	Past Simple	Example Sentence
be	was / were	I was tired yesterday.
have	had	We had breakfast together.
do	did	She did her homework early.
go	went	I went to the gym this morning.
get	got	He got a new job last month.
make	made	She made dinner for everyone.
say	said	He said the meeting was canceled.
see	saw	I saw a great film last week.
know	knew	I knew the answer immediately.
think	thought	I thought about it all day.
take	took	It took an hour to get there.
come	came	She came to the party late.
give	gave	He gave me some good advice.
find	found	I found my keys in my bag.
tell	told	She told me a funny story.
feel	felt	I felt nervous before the test.
leave	left	We left the house at eight.
put	put	She put the book on the table.
bring	brought	He brought his laptop to work.
buy	bought	I bought a new phone yesterday.
write	wrote	She wrote a long email.
read	read	I read the news this morning.
speak	spoke	He spoke to the manager directly.
meet	met	We met some old friends today.
eat	ate	They ate dinner at seven.
drink	drank	I drank a lot of water today.

drive	drove	She drove to work this morning.
run	ran	He ran five kilometers yesterday.
understand	understood	I understood the explanation well.
begin	began	The lesson began on time.

How to practice: Cover the "Past Simple" column and try to recall each form from memory before checking. For the irregular list, group verbs that sound similar (think→thought, buy→bought, bring→brought) to help the patterns stick faster.