

E. Better sorry than shunk

She used to _shink_ possums.

Now she _shinks_ groundhogs for a living.

When she was in Eugene, she _shank_ thirty-three possums in one day.

Then she took us possum-_shinking_ in the Cascades.

This is the most likely set of forms for this verb, because of the relatively large number of real verbs that work this way in English, e.g., drink, drinks, drank, drinking, drunk; shrink, shrinks, shrank, shrinking, shrunk; sing, sings, sang, singing, sunk; sink, sings, sank, sinking, sunk, etc. These can serve as analogical models for new verb forms, e.g., children sometimes say things like "I brang my new toy" on this analogy.

E2: There are many, potentially an infinite number of, possible solutions to E1. The second most likely solutions are based on the analogy of other real verbs that have a "short u" sound in the form that follows "had", e.g.

shank, shanks, shunk, shanking, shunk based on hang, hangs, hung, hanging, hung (the alternate conjugations of this verb take "hanged" after "have," e.g., "They have already hanged the murderer.")

shink, shinks, shunk, shinking, shunk based on dig, digs, dug, digging, dug.

shunk, shunks, shank, shunking, shunk based on run, runs, ran, running, run. (This is less likely because there is only one verb in English that acts this way).

Much less likely:

shunk, shunks, shunk, shunking, shunk base on cut, cuts, cut, cutting, cut. (This is less likely because this class of real verbs in English all end in t or d, not k or g.

Even less likely, there may be any number of random forms of this verb, say yerkle, blumbles, jambolick, borging, shunk. Since this is a nonsense verb, and some verbs (like "to be" and "to go") are very irregular in English, it is impossible to limit the possible forms it could take. However, this solution is extremely unlikely, since in fact no verbs in English are totally random in their patterns, and those that are nearly so (like "to be" and "to go") are verbs that are used very often. Presumably "to shink/shunk" would not be such a common verb.