

## Pronunciation of -ed

### 0.0 Uses

- There are three different pronunciations of –ed: /ɪd/; /t/; /d/
  - Remember that anytime you see what appears to be letters between the backslash characters //, they are symbols of the *International Phonetical Alphabet*, representing sounds and **not** letters (although they may frequently appear to be letters). You need to forget that they look like letters.
- Which of the three pronunciations used depends on the **sound** of the syllable that comes before the -ed (i.e. the sound of the last syllable of word the “ed” is added to).
  - Remember that it is the sound of the last syllable and **not** the letter itself that dictates the pronunciation of the final -ed. I provide examples below to illustrate this.
- The pronunciation rules apply to all words ending in an “ed”:
  - Regular Past Simple Forms.
  - “ed” Adjectives
  - Past Participles used in the Perfect tenses.

### 0.1 Descriptions of Pronunciations

/ɪd/	/t/ (unvoiced/unvocalised)	/d/ (voiced/vocalised)
<p>This is the same sound as /d/ but with an extra syllable /ɪ/ in before it.</p> <p>The /ɪ/ is a short vowel sound as in “f<u>i</u>sh” combined with the voiced/vocalised plosive consonant /d/ sound as in “<u>d</u>ad”.</p>	<p>This is an unvoiced plosive consonant /t/ sound as in “h<u>i</u>t”.</p> <p>This has the same mouth formation as /d/ but the vocal chords (voice box) is <b>not</b> activated and <b>does not</b> vibrate.</p> <p>If you place your hand on your throat while you say this you should not feel the vibration all the sound comes from, and <b>only</b> comes from the mouth itself.</p> <p>The sound is made by placing the front of your tongue to the roof of your mouth just behind the teeth. You build up a reserve of pressurised air behind this and let out in a forward explosive burst of air while detaching your tongue from the roof of your mouth.</p>	<p>This is a voiced plosive consonant /d/ sound as in “<u>d</u>ay”.</p> <p>This has the same mouth formation as /t/ but the vocal chords (voice box) is activated and vibrates.</p> <p>If you place your hand on your throat while you say this you should feel the vibration. The sound is a mixture of the vibration from your throat and the sound from your mouth.</p> <p>For native Spanish speakers this sound is difficult as it does not exist in Spanish <i>at the end of words</i> but it can be described as shortened version the “duh” sound you make at someone when they say or do something stupid.</p> <p>Native Spanish speakers need to practice this sound to get it right.</p>

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### 0.2 General & Specific Rules of Pronunciation

ITEM	#	/ɪd/	#	/t/	#	/d/
GENERAL RULES	A	After all the following voiced & unvoiced sounds: /t/ /d/	B	After all unvoiced sounds except: /t/	C	After all voiced sounds except: /d/
SPECIFIC RULES	1	/t/ <b>Wanted</b> / t ɪ d /  This is an example of the past simple, a past participle or an adjective	3	/p/ <b>Hoped</b> / p t /  This is an example of the past simple or a past participle	9	<b>All Other Sounds</b> (except those specified in A and B)
			*4	/f/ <b>Laughed</b> / f t /  This is an example of the past simple, a past participle or an adjective	9a	<b>Voiced Consonant Sounds:</b>
			5	/ʃ/ <b>Brushed</b> / ʃ t /  This is an example of the past simple, a past participle or an adjective		/b/ <b>Stubbed</b> / b d /  This is an example of the past simple or a past participle
			6	/tʃ/ <b>Watched</b> / tʃ t /  This is an example of the past simple, a past participle or an adjective		/l/ <b>Yelled</b> / l d /  This is an example of the past simple, a past participle or an adjective
			*7	/s/ <b>Faxed</b> / s t /  This is an example of the past simple, a past participle or an adjective		/g/ <b>Begged</b> / g d /  This is an example of the past simple or a past participle
	2	/d/ <b>Ended</b> / d ɪ d /  This is an example of the past simple, a past participle or an adjective	8	/k/ <b>Booked</b> / k t /  This is an example of the past simple, a past participle or an adjective	*9b	Etc... (plus other voiced sounds)
						<b>Vowel ‡(and Diphthong) Sounds</b>
						// <b>Played</b> / eɪ d /  This is an example of the past simple, a past participle or an adjective
						// <b>Owed</b> / əʊ d /  This is an example of the past simple or a past participle

General N.B. I have only included the phonetic symbols for the **last syllable of the word the -ed is added to** and for the **-ed sound** in the above table to avoid confusion.

\*N.B. These examples illustrate that it is the syllable sound and not the letter that dictates the pronunciation of the final -ed.

‡N.B. This is almost superfluous as diphthongs are a combination of two vowel sounds so they always also end in a vowel sound.

t/fN.B. These may also seem superfluous as /tʃ/ and /f/ both end in /ʃ/. They are, however, different, separate single IPA symbols.

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### 0.3 Pitfalls, Exceptions and Heads-ups

There are a few things you need to be careful of and some pitfalls to avoid.

- **EXCEPTIONS:** Exceptions include the following:
  - When there are equivalent /t/ *-ed adjectives* and *-ed verbs*, the *adjective -ed* pronunciation form is often an exception and changes to /ɪd/ (see the upper side, above the double line, of the table below).
  - Words like “naked” and “wretched” have no verb form and take the /ɪd/ pronunciation even though the rules suggest it should be /t/ (see the bottom side, below the double line, of the table below) and
  - “learn” which as a Simple Past or Past Participle has two pronunciation options /t/ and /d/ (see the highlighted cell in the table below).
    - Some pronunciations of this are more common in some regions/countries while others are more common in other regions/areas.

(VERB) BASE	PRONUNCIATION OF -ed	
	PAST / PAST PARTICIPLE PRONUNCIATION	EXCEPTION: ADJECTIVE PRONUNCIATION
Age	Aged / ɔː d /	Aged / ɔː ɪ d /
Bless	Blessed / s t /	Blessed / s ɪ d /
Accuse	Accused / s t /	Accused / s ɪ d /
Learn	Learned / n d / / n t /	Learned / n ɪ d /
“Naked” (there is no verb “To naked”)	n/a	Naked / k ɪ d /
“Wretched” (there is no verb “To wretch”)	n/a	Wretched / tʃ ɪ d /

## Pronunciation of -ed

- **PITFALL -se/-ze:**

- There are certain types of words that extra care needs to be taken with when pronouncing.
  - This is particularly the case with words that end in -ise and -ize.
    - There are many of these words that are spelt:
      - **-ise in both European English in American English**
      - **-ise in European English and -ize in American English**
      - **-ize in both European English in American English**
    - They are pronounced / aɪz/ the overwhelming majority of the time with a vocalised /z/ sound at the end
      - It is therefore often easier to recognise this pronunciation when they use the letter “z”
      - This situation is further complicated for native Spanish speakers in that the vocalised con /z/ sound does not exist in Spanish and they naturally want to pronounce them /s/ and have to force themselves to vocalise the /z/ sound until it becomes automatic.
    - ~~They are, however, sometimes pronounced //~~
    - If in doubt, look the word up in a good dictionary that has the IPA: [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)
  - **This is also the case with other words, although to a much lesser extent, for example words ending in -ose and -use.**

EXAMPLES OF SPELLING & PRONUNCIATION DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN ENGLISH				
European English			American English	
Spelling & Pronunciation Base	-ed Spelling	-ed Pronunciation	-ed Spelling	Spelling & Pronunciation Base
<b>Despise</b>	<b>Despised</b>	/ - <b>par</b> z d/	<b>Despised</b>	<b>Despise</b>
<b>Surprise</b>	<b>Surprised</b>	/ - <b>ra</b> ɪz d/	<b>Surprised</b>	<b>Surprised</b>
<b>Televis</b>	<b>Televised</b>	/ - <b>va</b> ɪz d/	<b>Televised</b>	<b>Televis</b>
<b>Criticise</b>	<b>Criticised</b>	/ - <b>sa</b> ɪz d/	<b>Criticized</b>	<b>Criticize</b>
<b>Prioritise</b>	<b>Prioritised</b>	/ - <b>ta</b> ɪz d/	<b>Prioritized</b>	<b>Prioritize</b>
<b>Analyse</b>	<b>Analysed</b>	/ - <b>la</b> ɪz d/	<b>Analyzed</b>	<b>Analyze</b>
<b>Mobilise</b>	<b>Mobilised</b>	/ - <b>la</b> ɪz d/	<b>Mobilized</b>	<b>Mobilize</b>
<b>Categorise</b>	<b>Categorised</b>	/ - <b>ra</b> ɪz d/	<b>Categorized</b>	<b>Categorize</b>
<b>Subsidise</b>	<b>Subsidised</b>	/ - <b>da</b> ɪz d/	<b>Subsidized</b>	<b>Subsidize</b>
<b>Finalise</b>	<b>Finalised</b>	/ - <b>la</b> ɪz d/	<b>Finalized</b>	<b>Finalize</b>
<b>Objectivise</b>	<b>Objectivised</b>	/ - <b>va</b> ɪz d/	<b>Objectivized</b>	<b>Objectivize</b>
<b>Incentivise</b>	<b>Incentivised</b>	/ - <b>va</b> ɪz d/	<b>Incentivized</b>	<b>Incentivize</b>
<b>Capsize</b>	<b>Capsized</b>	/ - <b>sa</b> ɪz d/	<b>Capsized</b>	<b>Capsize</b>
<b>Size</b>	<b>Sized</b>	/ - <b>sa</b> ɪz d/	<b>Sized</b>	<b>Size</b>
<b>Diagnose</b>	<b>Diagnosed</b>	/ - <b>nou</b> z d/	<b>Diagnosed</b>	<b>Diagnose</b>
<b>Propose</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	/ - <b>pou</b> z d/	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Propose</b>
<b>Accuse</b>	<b>Accused</b>	/ - <b>kju</b> :z d/	<b>Accused</b>	<b>Accuse</b>

## Pronunciation of -ed

- **PITFALL: Minimal Pairs:**

- Minimal Pairs are words that with a very slight change in phonetic sound within the word the meaning changes completely:
  - Examples of minimal pairs are:
    - **Beer** v **Bear**
    - **Berry** v **Very**
    - **Beach** v **Bitch**
  - Minimal Pairs can also be significant in the case of final syllable plus -ed sound combinations, illustrating the importance of getting the pronunciation correct. I provide an example below:

VERB SPELLING & PRONUNCIATION	MEANING / SYNONYM	-ed SPELLING & PRONUNCIATION
To Cease / sis /	To Stop; To Finish; To End; To Terminate; To Conclude	Ceased / sist /
To Seize / siz /	To Grab (Hold Of); To Grasp; To Clutch; To Take Hold Of	Seized / sizd /