

# Irregular Verb

## Definition of Irregular Verb

An irregular verb is a type of verb that does not follow the general rule of using “-ed” at the end of the word to make the [past tense](#) or the past [participle](#) form. It means the spellings of an irregular verb can be tricky, and may follow a different pattern.

The most common irregular lexical verbs in English grammar are: say, go, get, think, know, come, make, take, and see. They usually follow the pattern like drink–drank, know–knew, blow–blew, spring–sprang, or none of these such as put–put or cut–cut. For instance, “Mr. Jones went into Willingdon and got so drunk at the Red Lion that he did not come back till midday on Sunday” (*Animal Farm*, by George Orwell). Here the underlined words are irregular verb forms.

## Common Use of Irregular Verb

He flew his kite very high.  
I felt wonderful yesterday.  
My parents came to the farewell party at my school.  
She caught the apple.  
Jenny drew a beautiful picture for her parents.

Here, the verbs “flew, felt, came, caught, drew, and bit” have used past tense to represent what happened in past.

He has felt wonderful today.  
She has flown a kite.  
They have eaten cake and pizza with the tea.  
They have gone back home.  
The rat has bitten her hand.

In these two sets of examples, the irregular verbs “felt, flown, eaten, gone, and bitten” appear in the past tense with the helping verbs “has, had, and have.”

## Examples of Irregular Verbs in Literature

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### Example #1: *Riverbank Tweed and Roadmap Jenkins* (by Bo Links)

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“He said Roadmap Jenkins got the good loops because he knew the yardage and read the break better than anyone else.”

In this example, the author has used two irregular verbs “knew, and read” as underlined.

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### Example #2: *Forty Years a Gambler on the Mississippi* (by George H. Devol)

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“Hearts *were* trumps. I stood, and made three to his nothing. I dealt; he begged; I gave him one, and made three more.”

These lines present a good example of irregular verbs, which include “stood, made, dealt, and gave.” None of these words have added “d,” or “-ed” at the end.

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### Example #3: *Ode to Nightingale* (by John Keats)

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“My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,  
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains  
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:  
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!  
What thou among the leaves hast never known.”

Here, Keats has used both the past tense “sunburnt,” and helping verbs with past participles “drunk, sunk, and known.”

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### Example #4: *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (by S.T. Coleridge)

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“The guests are met, the feast is set:  
The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:  
The Sun came up upon the left,  
Out of the sea came he!  
And he shone bright, and on the right  
Went down into the sea.  
The Sun now rose upon the right...  
Still hid in mist, and on the left.”

Coleridge has excellently used the irregular verbs “met, sat, came, left, shone, went, rose, and hid” with past tense to represent past events.

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#### **Example #5: *To Kill a Mockingbird* (by Harper Lee)**

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“When he was nearly thirteen, my brother Jem got his arm badly broken at the elbow. When enough years had gone by to enable us to look back on them, we sometimes discussed the events leading to his accident. ... He said it began the summer Dill came to us, when Dill first gave us the idea of making Boo Radley come out.”

Here, Lee has used past tense of the irregular verbs “got, began, and came.” He has also used the [past participle](#) “gone,” with the [helping verb](#) “had,” to form the perfect tense.

### **Function of Irregular Verb**

An irregular verb plays the same role that other types of verb play; that is to tell about the [subject](#) doing an action. It expresses a relationship with time, like what happened at which time, which means telling about action that happened in the near or far past, and not about the present or the future time. In writing, the use of irregular verbs is crucial, for it informs about the timing of the action and type of the tense. However, in a speech, people can usually understand its meaning despite incorrect use. Structurally, it is used to signify the past tense in a [sentence](#).