Irregular Verbs

There are a number of verbs that do not follow the expected spelling patterns when tense changes. Because of this, they are called “irregular.”

**For most regular verbs, one would simply add “d,” “ed,” or “ied” to show past tense.**

For example: walk = walked, play = played, taste = tasted, and study = studied.

**Irregular verbs, however, do not follow this rule.**

**Some common irregular verbs are:**

Tell

Speak

Run

Eat

Drink

Think

Make

Take

Shake

Do

Be

Go

See

Say

Get

Give

Know

Come

* These verbs are currently in present tense.

**If we were to take those same verbs and convert them to past tense, they would look like this:**

Told

Spoke

Ran

Ate

Drank

Thought

Made

Took

Shook

Did

Been

Went

Saw

Said

Got

Gave

Knew

Came

* These verbs have been converted to show simple past tense. The verbs may change even further as the tense changes. Be sure to consult the Verb Tense handout for further clarification of these topics

**The same verbs in present progressive tense (an action is in progress)**

**and past continuous tense (an action was is progress in the past):**

Telling

Speaking

Running

Eating

Drinking

Thinking

Making

Taking

Shaking

Doing

Being

Going

Seeing

Saying

Getting

Giving

Knowing

Coming

* Notice that in these cases, the continuous tense utilizes the “ing” form of the present tense of the verb.
* When verbs are in this form, the “be” verb is often used as a **helping verb** with the **main verb**.

**For example:**

I **am telling** you the truth. They **are making** sandwiches. They **are seeing** a play.

She **is speaking** to you. I **am taking** a nap. I understand what you **are saying**.

We **are running** away. We **are shaking** the tree. He **is getting** tired.

The “Do” Verb

**Do** is an irregular verb. **Do** may be used as a *main* verb or as a *helping* verb. Whenever a single word form of “do” is used, or if “do” is the *last* word in a phrasal verb then it is the principal verb in the sentence.

* Main verb example: I do the dishes. I can do the dishes.

“Do” is the main verb in the phrasal verb “can do.”

When any form of “do” is the first word in a phrasal verb, then “do” is the helping verb.

* Helping verb example: I do think that my daughter should wash the dishes.

“Do” is the helping verb; “think” is the main verb.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Person & Number** | **Present** | **Past** | **Future** |
|  | Action happening now | Action is completed | Action to come |
|  | do | did | will do |
|  |  |  |  |
| 1st Person Singular | I do the dishes. | I did the dishes. | I will do the dishes. |
| 2nd Person Singular | You do | You did | You will do |
| 3rd Person Singular | He/she/it ***does***  third person singular rule – add “es” | He/she/it did | He/she/it will do |
| 1st Person Plural | We do | We did | We will do |
| 2nd Person Plural | You do | You did | You will do |
| 3rd Person Plural | They do | They did | They will do |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Person & Number** | **Present Perfect** | **Past Perfect** | **Future Perfect** |
|  | ← Action began in the past & continues  into present→ | One action completed • before another one took place ← | Action will be complete • before a specific time → |
|  | have/has + done | had + done | will + have + done |
|  |  |  |  |
| 1st Person Singular | I have done the dishes many times. | I had done the dishes before I watched TV. | I will have done the dishes by the time you arrive. |
| 2nd Person Singular | You have done | You had done | You will have done |
| 3rd Person Singular | He/she/it ***has*** done  third person singular rule – use the “s” form of the helping “have” verb | He/she/it had done | He/she/it will have done |
| 1st Person Plural | We have done | We had done | We will have done |
| 2nd Person Plural | You have done | You had done | You will have done |
| 3rd Person Plural | They have done | They had done | They will have done |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Person & Number** | **Present Continuous** | **Past Continuous** | **Future Continuous** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | Present “be” verb + doing | Past “be” verb + doing | Will + be + doing |
|  |  |  |  |
| 1st Person Singular | I am doing the dishes. | I was doing the dishes. | I will be doing the dishes. |
| 2nd Person Singular | You are doing | You were doing | You will be doing |
| 3rd Person Singular | He/she/it ***is*** doing  third person singular rule –use the “s” form of the “be” verb | He/she/it ***was*** doing | He/she/it will be doing |
| 1st Person Plural | We are doing | We were doing | We will be doing |
| 2nd Person Plural | You are doing | You were doing | You will be doing |
| 3rd Person Plural | They are doing | They were doing | They will be doing |

The “Do” Verb: Common Use and Practice

**Using “do” to form questions:**

* Do you like to wash dishes?
* Yes, I do. / No, I don’t.
* Does she like to wash dishes?
* Yes, she does. /No, she doesn’t.
* Do they like to help with cleaning up?
* Yes, they do. /No, they don’t.

**Using “do” for emphasis:**

* Do you like to write poems?
* I do! Writing poetry is my favorite hobby.
* Does John want to go fishing on his day off?
* He does! He is really looking forward to it.
* People who smoke cigarettes do have increased health risks.

**Idioms that include “do” and their meaning:**

* **Do over** – repeat; redecorate
* **Do without** – to not have something
* **Do away with** – eliminate
* **Do a double take** – take a second look
* **Do a one – eighty** – to make a change; one hundred and eighty degree turn; opposite
* **Does a heart good** – satisfying feeling
* **Do you read me** – do you understand; do you hear me
* **Easy does it** – stay calm, take your time
* **That does it** – something is finished; might imply angry frustration
* **How does that grab you?** – What do you think?
* **Do your thing** – be yourself; be active in the activities that are of interest to you

**Practice Exercises:**

**Select the form of the verb “do” that is most appropriate for each situation.**

There are some sentences that may have more than one correct answer. For instance, in the first sentence, both “do” and “did” are grammatically correct. The selection of “do” indicates that the subject (I) still does exercises every morning. The use of “did” indicates that the subject used to do exercises every morning but has stopped. In this instance, either could be correct. Context clues can be used to determine which should be used in a larger body of work. Consult with a tutor to get some help building strategies for this type of situation. You may also work with a tutor to determine why one answer might be chosen over another in these examples.

I (do/ did/ does/ doing) strengthening exercises every morning.

She (do/ did/ does/ doing) strengthening exercises every morning but doesn’t any more.

They (had done/ has done/ have done) this before.

They (do play / did play / does play / doing play) baseball last summer.

She (had done/ has done/ have been doing) her homework for this chapter.

She (has done/ had done/ had been doing/ have been doing) her homework for this chapter when the phone rang.

She (have done/ had done / has been doing) her calculus homework.

The “Be” Verb

**To Be** is an irregular verb that often acts as a **“linking verb.”** Meaning, it links the subject of a sentence to a word or group of words that renames or describes the subject For example: Bob **is** happy, or I **am** exhausted. “Is” and “am’ are forms of the “Be” verb. “It can also act as a “**helping verb.”** It will come before the main verb. This is often the case with present continuous, and future tenses: I **am running**. I **will fold** the laundry. In these examples, “running” and “fold” are the main verbs, while “am” and “will” are forms of the verb “Be.” Note that in the present tense, the “-ing” form of the main verb is used.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Person & Number** | **Present** | **Past** | **Future** |
|  | Action happening now | Action is completed | Action to come |
|  | is | was | will be |
|  |  |  |  |
| 1st Person Singular | I am | I was | I will be |
| 2nd Person Singular | You are | You were | You will be |
| 3rd Person Singular | He/she/it is | He/she/it was | He/she/it will be |
| 1st Person Plural | We are | We were | We will be |
| 2nd Person Plural | You are | You were | You will be |
|  |  |  |  |
| 3rd Person Plural | They are | They were | They will be |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Person & Number** | **Present Perfect** | **Past Perfect** | **Future Perfect** |
|  | ← Action began in the past & continues  into present→ | One action completed • before another one took place ← | Action will be complete • before a specific time → |
|  | have/has + been | had + been | will + have + been |
|  |  |  |  |
| 1st Person Singular | I have been washing many dishes. | I had been washing the dishes before I watched TV. | I will have been finished the dishes by the time you arrive. |
| 2nd Person Singular | You have been washing many dishes | You had been washing | You will have been finished |
| 3rd Person Singular | He/she/it ***has*** been  third person singular rule – use the “s” form of the helping “have” verb | He/she/it had been washing | He/she/it will have been finished |
| 1st Person Plural | We have been washing many dishes | We had been | We will have been finished |
| 2nd Person Plural | You have been washing many dishes | You had been | You will have been finished |
| 3rd Person Plural | They have been washing many dishes | They had been | They will have been finished |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Person & Number** | **Present Continuous** | **Past Continuous** | **Future Continuous** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | Present “be” verb + doing | Past “be” verb + doing | Will + be + doing |
|  |  |  |  |
| 1st Person Singular | I am doing the dishes. | I have been doing the dishes. | I will be doing the dishes. |
| 2nd Person Singular | You are doing | You were doing | You will be doing |
| 3rd Person Singular | He/she/it ***is*** doing  third person singular rule – use the “s” form of the “be” verb | He/she/it ***was*** doing | He/she/it will be doing |
| 1st Person Plural | We are doing | We were doing | We will be doing |
| 2nd Person Plural | You are doing | You were doing | You will be doing |
| 3rd Person Plural | They are doing | They were doing | They will be doing |

The “Be” Verb: Common Use and Practice

**Using “be” to form questions:**

* **Are** you going to wash dishes?
* Yes, I am. / No, I am not.
* **Is** she going to wash dishes?
* Yes, she is. /No, she is not.
* **Will** they help with cleaning up?
* Yes, they will. /No, they will not.

**Idioms that include forms of “be” and their meaning:**

* **Be on time.** – Arrive at the scheduled time; be punctual.
* **I am broke.** – I do not have any money.
* **I will be back.** - I will return.
* **This is out of date.** – This (food) is no longer fresh; this (clothing) is no longer fashionable.

**Practice Exercises:**

**Select the form of the verb “be” that is most appropriate for each situation.**

There are some sentences that may have more than one correct answer. For instance, in the first sentence, both “am mowing” and “was mowing” are grammatically correct. The selection of “am mowing” indicates that the subject (I) is **still** mowing the lawn **at this moment**, while “was mowing” indicates that **the subject mowed the lawn earlier but has stopped**. In this instance, either could be correct. Context clues can be used to determine which should be used in a larger body of work.

Consult with a tutor to get some help building strategies for this type of situation. You may also work with a tutor to determine why one answer might be chosen over another in these examples.

I (am mowing /is mowing /are mowing /was mowing /were mowing) the lawn.

I (am mowing /is mowing /are mowing /was mowing /were mowing) the lawn this morning.

She (am /is /are /was /were) a cake decorator before she started working here.

He (am /is /are /was /were) a cake decorator.

They (am /is /are /was /were) at the baseball game.

They (have been attending / had been attending / has been attending) classes regularly.

She (have been attending / had been attending / has been attending) classes regularly.

She (have been attending / had been attending / has been attending) classes regularly before she broke her leg.

**Practice Exercise Answer Key:**

The “Do” Verb

**Select the form of the verb “do” that is most appropriate for each situation.**

I (do/ did/ does/ doing) strengthening exercises every morning.

She (do/ did/ does/ doing) strengthening exercises every morning but doesn’t anymore.

They (had done/ has done/ have done) this before.

They (do play / did play / does play / doing play) baseball last summer.

She (had done/ has done/ have been doing) her homework for this chapter.

She (has done/ had done/ had been doing/ have been doing) her homework for this chapter when the phone rang.

She (have done/ had done / has been doing) her calculus homework.

The “Be” Verb

**Select the form of the verb “be” that is most appropriate for each situation.**

I (am mowing /is mowing /are mowing /was mowing /were mowing) the lawn.

I (am mowing /is mowing /are mowing /was mowing /were mowing) the lawn this morning.

She (am /is /are /was /were) a cake decorator before she started working here.

He (am /is /are /was /were) a cake decorator.

They (am /is /are /was /were) at the baseball game.

They (have been attending / had been attending / has been attending) classes regularly.

She (have been attending / had been attending / has been attending) classes regularly.

She (have been attending / had been attending / has been attending) classes regularly before she broke her leg.