

Irregular Verbs

Many verbs are irregular, and most of them are listed below.

📖 See also CEG pp. 227 – 229.

Infinitive	Past Simple	Past Participle	German	Examples (Proverbs)
arise	arose	arisen	<i>aufstehen, aufsteigen</i>	
awake	awoke	awoken	<i>erwachen</i>	
be	was / were	been	<i>sein</i>	No news is good news. When the cat's away the mice will play.
bear [beə(r)]	bore	borne, born	<i>ertragen</i>	
beat	beat	beaten	<i>schlagen</i>	If you can't beat them, join them.
become	became	become	<i>werden</i>	Try not to become a man of success but a man of value.
begin	began	begun	<i>beginnen</i>	Charity begins at home.
bend	bent	bent	<i>biegen</i>	
bet	bet	bet	<i>wetten</i>	
bid	bid	bid	<i>bieten</i>	
bind [baɪnd]	bound	bound	<i>binden</i>	
bite	bit	bitten	<i>beissen</i>	Once bitten twice shy. Barking dogs seldom bite.
bleed	bled	bled	<i>bluten</i>	
blow	blew	blown	<i>blasen</i>	It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good.
break	broke	broken	<i>brechen</i>	
breed	bred	bred	<i>brüten</i>	
bring	brought	brought	<i>bringen</i>	Curiosity killed the cat, but the knowledge brought it back.
broadcast	broadcast	broadcast	<i>senden (TV)</i>	
build	built	built	<i>bauen</i>	Rome wasn't built in a day.
burn	burnt	burnt	<i>brennen</i>	A burnt child dreads the fire.
burst	burst	burst	<i>platzen</i>	
buy	bought	bought	<i>kaufen</i>	If you buy cheaply, you pay dearly.
cast	cast	cast	<i>werfen, giessen</i>	Cast not your pearls before swine.

catch	caught	caught	<i>fangen</i>	The early bird catches the worm.
choose	chose	chosen	<i>wählen</i>	You can choose your friends, but you can't choose your family.
cling	clung	clung	<i>festhalten</i>	
come	came	come	<i>kommen</i>	First come, first served.
cost	cost	cost	<i>kosten</i>	
creep	crept	crept	<i>kriechen</i>	
cut	cut	cut	<i>schneiden</i>	Cut your coat according to your cloth.
deal	dealt	dealt	<i>handeln</i>	
dig	dug	dug	<i>graben</i>	
do	did	done	<i>tun</i>	Do as you would be done by.
draw	drew	drawn	<i>zeichnen</i>	
dream	dreamt	dreamt	<i>träumen</i>	
drink	drank	drunk	<i>trinken</i>	You can take a horse to the water, but you can't make it drink.
drive	drove	driven	<i>fahren</i>	It is not so much the gift that is given but the way in which the gift is driven.
dwell	dwelt	dwelt	<i>wohnen</i>	
eat	ate	eaten	<i>essen</i>	
fall	fell	fallen	<i>fallen</i>	
feed	fed	fed	<i>füttern</i>	
feel	felt	felt	<i>(sich) fühlen</i>	
fight	fought	fought	<i>kämpfen</i>	
find	found	found	<i>finden</i>	
flee	fled	fled	<i>fliehen</i>	
fling	flung	flung	<i>schleudern, werfen</i>	
fly	flew	flown	<i>fliegen</i>	
forbid	forbade	forbidden	<i>verbieten</i>	Forbidden fruit is the sweetest.
forget	forgot	forgotten	<i>vergessen</i>	
forgive	forgave	forgiven	<i>vergeben</i>	To err is human, to forgive is divine.
forsake	forsook	forsaken	<i>aufgeben, verlassen</i>	
freeze	froze	frozen	<i>frieren</i>	
get	got	got	<i>bekommen</i>	All cats love fish but hate to get their paws wet.

give	gave	given	<i>geben</i>	It's better to give than to receive.
go	went	gone	<i>gehen</i>	You never know what you've got till it's gone.
grind [grænd]	ground	ground	<i>mahlen</i>	
grow	grew	grown	<i>wachsen</i>	
hang	hung (hanged)	hung (hanged)	<i>(auf)hängen (jdn hängen)</i>	
have	had	had	<i>haben</i>	
have to (must)	had to	had to	<i>müssen</i>	
hear	heard	heard	<i>hören</i>	Ask no questions and hear no lies.
hide	hid	hidden	<i>verstecken</i>	
hit	hit	hit	<i>schlagen</i>	
hold	held	held	<i>halten</i>	
hurt	hurt	hurt	<i>schmerzen</i>	
keep	kept	kept	<i>behalten</i>	An apple a day keeps the doctor away.
kneel	knelt	knelt	<i>knien</i>	
know	knew	known	<i>wissen</i>	A person is known by the company he keeps.
lay	laid	laid	<i>legen</i>	A wild goose never laid a tame egg.
lead	led	led	<i>führen</i>	You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink.
lean	leant	leant	<i>lehnen</i>	
leap	leapt	leapt	<i>springen</i>	Look before you leap.
learn	learnt	learnt	<i>lernen</i>	Learn to walk before your run.
leave	left	left	<i>verlassen</i>	
lend	lent	lent	<i>leihen</i>	
let	let	let	<i>lassen</i>	Let sleeping dogs lie.
lie	lay	lain	<i>liegen</i>	
light	lit	lit	<i>anzünden</i>	
lose	lost	lost	<i>verlieren</i>	A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle.
make	made	made	<i>machen</i>	Empty vessels make most sound. Make hay while the sun shines.
mean	meant	meant	<i>meinen</i>	
meet	met	met	<i>treffen</i>	
mislead	misled	misled	<i>irreführen</i>	

misspell	misspelt	misspelt	<i>falsch buchstabieren</i>	
mistake	mistook	mistaken	<i>missverstehen</i>	The start of a journey should never be mistaken for success.
misunderstand	misunderstood	misunderstood	<i>missverstehen</i>	
mow [məʊ]	mowed	mown	<i>mähen</i>	
overcome	overcame	overcome	<i>siegen, überwinden</i>	
partake	partook	partaken	<i>teilnehmen, -haben</i>	
pay	paid	paid	<i>bezahlen</i>	It pays to pay attention.
prove	proved	proven, proved	<i>beweisen</i>	The exception proves the rule.
put	put	put	<i>legen, stellen, setzen</i>	Don't put the cart before the horse.
quit	quit	quit	<i>verlassen</i>	
read	read	read	<i>lesen</i>	Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint.
rebuild	rebuilt	rebuilt	<i>erneuern</i>	
rend	rent	rent	<i>(zer)reißen</i>	
rid	rid	rid	<i>befreien, loswerden</i>	
ride	rode	ridden	<i>reiten</i>	If wishes were horses, beggars would ride.
ring	rang	rung	<i>läuten, anrufen</i>	
rise	rose	risen	<i>aufgehen</i>	Early to bed—early to rise.
run	ran	run	<i>rennen</i>	Still waters run deep.
saw [sɔ:]	sawed	sawn	<i>sägen</i>	
say	said	said	<i>sagen</i>	Never say never.
see	saw	seen	<i>sehen</i>	You ain't seen nothing yet.
seek	sought	sought	<i>begehren, suchen</i>	Seek and ye shall find.
sell	sold	sold	<i>verkaufen</i>	
send	sent	sent	<i>schicken, senden</i>	
set	set	set	<i>stellen, legen, setzen</i>	Set a thief to catch a thief.
sew [səʊ]	sewed	sewn	<i>nähen</i>	
shake	shook	shaken	<i>schütteln</i>	
shed	shed	shed	<i>vergiessen, abwerfen</i>	
shine	shone	shone	<i>scheinen, glänzen</i>	Make hay while the sun shines.
shoot	shot	shot	<i>schiessen</i>	If you were born to be shot, you'll never be hung.

show	showed	shown	<i>zeigen</i>	
shrink	shrank	shrunk	<i>schrumpfen</i>	
shut	shut	shut	<i>schliessen</i>	Don't shut the gate after the horse has bolted.
sing	sang	sung	<i>singen</i>	
sink	sank	sunk	<i>sinken</i>	Loose lips sink ships.
sit	sat	sat	<i>sitzen</i>	After dinner sit a while, after supper walk a mile.
slay	slew	slain	<i>erschlagen</i>	
sleep	slept	slept	<i>schlafen</i>	If you want breakfast in bed, sleep in the kitchen.
slide	slid	slid	<i>rutschen</i>	
sling	slung	slung	<i>schleudern, werfen</i>	
slink	slunk	slunk	<i>schleichen</i>	
smell	smelt	smelt	<i>riechen</i>	A fox smells his own stink first.
sow [səʊ]	sowed	sown	<i>sähen</i>	As you sow, so shall you reap.
speak	spoke	spoken	<i>sprechen</i>	Actions speak louder than words.
speed	ped	ped	<i>eilen, schnell fahren</i>	
spell	spelt	spelt	<i>buchstabieren</i>	
spend	spent	spent	<i>ausgeben, verbringen</i>	
spill	spilt	spilt	<i>verschütten</i>	Don't cry over spilt milk.
spin	spun	spun	<i>sich (schnell) drehen</i>	
spit	spat	spat	<i>spucken</i>	Don't spit into the wind.
split	split	split	<i>(zer)teilen, spalten</i>	
spoil	spoilt	spoilt	<i>verderben, verwöhnen</i>	Too many cooks spoil the broth.
spread	spread	spread	<i>ausbreiten, verteilen</i>	
spring	sprang	sprung	<i>springen</i>	Hope springs eternal.
stand	stood	stood	<i>stehen</i>	
steal	stole	stolen	<i>stehlen</i>	He that will steal an egg will steal an ox.
stick	stuck	stuck	<i>stecken</i>	
sting	stung	stung	<i>stechen</i>	
stink	stank	stunk	<i>stinken</i>	
strike	struck	struck	<i>schlagen</i>	Strike while the iron is hot.
string	strung	strung	<i>bespannen, aufhängen</i>	

strive	strove	striven	<i>anstreben</i>	
swear	swore	sworn	<i>schwören</i>	
sweat	sweat	sweat	<i>schwitzen</i>	
sweep	swept	swept	<i>kehren, fegen</i>	New brooms sweep clean.
swell	swelled	swollen	<i>anschwellen</i>	
swim	swam	swum	<i>schwimmen</i>	
swing	swung	swung	<i>schwingen</i>	There is not enough room to swing a cat.
take	took	taken	<i>nehmen</i>	One can take a horse to water, twenty can not make him drink.
teach	taught	taught	<i>lehren</i>	You can't teach an old dog new tricks.
tear [teə(r)]	tore	torn	<i>reißen</i>	
tell	told	told	<i>erzählen</i>	Ask me no questions, I'll tell you no lies.
think	thought	thought	<i>denken</i>	
throw	threw	thrown	<i>werfen</i>	Don't throw out the baby with the bathwater.
thrust	thrust	thrust	<i>schieben, stossen, werfen</i>	
tread	trod	trodden	<i>treten, schreiten</i>	
undergo	underwent	undergone	<i>durchmachen</i>	
understand	understood	understood	<i>verstehen</i>	
undertake	undertook	undertaken	<i>ausführen, unternehmen</i>	
upset	upset	upset	<i>verärgern, stören</i>	
wake	woke	woken	<i>wecken</i>	
wear	wore	worn	<i>(Kleider) tragen</i>	If the shoe fits, wear it.
weave [wi:v]	wove	woven	<i>weben</i>	
weep	wept	wept	<i>weinen</i>	
win	won	won	<i>gewinnen</i>	Faint heart never won fair lady.
wind [waɪnd]	wound	wound	<i>winden, wickeln</i>	
withdraw	withdrew	withdrawn	<i>Geld abheben, zurückziehen</i>	
wring	wrung	wrung	<i>auswringen</i>	
write	wrote	written	<i>schreiben</i>	Write injuries in the sand, kindnesses in marble.