

Conjugation of Verbs, Schematic

Enfos

This handout gives an overview of what the different verb forms look like, how they are formed. The rules for how and when to use these forms is explained in the separate handout Verb Grammar: an analytic approach.¹ Separating the verb form overview from the rules of when to use them was done because not all learners have difficulty with both aspects of verb grammar. There are quite a few that have difficulty with one but not with the other.

The terms 'tense' and 'verb tense' are avoided because some forms that used to be called verb tenses are now considered to be aspects. The form past continuous is seen as, past tense with the continuous aspect or the continuous aspect of the past tense.

To conjugate (inflect) regular verbs, you add letters to the stem of the verb. The **stem** of a verb is the infinitive without 'to'.

<i>infinitive:</i>	to work
<i>stem:</i>	work

Facts, Simple Always (simple present)

The verb form to indicate things which are normal or always true should best be called the **simple always** or **fact form**. The normally used term simple present is inaccurate or even a misnomer² and it is confusing because this tense does not always indicate things that are true or valid only now. To the contrary, as all grammar explanations say, it indicates things that are always true. Always, from minus infinite to infinite ($-\infty \leftarrow \text{now} \rightarrow +\infty$) or always in the context, which could be considered the same as "normal". More about **simple always** in the section Now, Simple Always, Fact Form of handout Verb Grammar: an analytic approach.³

In **simple always**, you use the unchanged stem of the verb for all grammatical persons except third person singular. For third person singular, an **-s** is added at the end of the **stem**. If the **stem** of the verb ends in an **o** you add **-es** but only the **-s** is pronounced (as [z]) (In this hand-out IPA is used)⁴ not the **e**. If the verb ends in a hissing sound (s [s], sh [ʃ], ch [tʃ], z [z], x [ks]) **-es** is added and pronounced as [əz] or [ɪz]. If the stem ends in an **e** adding one is not necessary so only **-s** is added.

The reason for adding an [ə] or [ɪ] sound between a hissing sound and the added **-s** is to help avoiding communication problems. An **-s** after a hissing sound can hardly be heard and is difficult or impossible to pronounce. The inserted [ə] or [ɪ] sound solves the problem by separating the added **-s** from the hissing sound. The listener can clearly hear the **-s** that has grammatical importance, indicating third person singular.

This handout can be downloaded for free from: <https://www.held.com.br/resources/>

¹Verb Grammar: an analytic approach: <https://www.held.com.br/resources#AnalAp>

²The name **past simple** does make sense because this tense does refer to the past and normally consists of one verb. Exceptions to having only one verb are **questions** and **negatives**. To make **questions** or **negatives** an auxiliary verb is necessary. To change sentences in simple past to questions or negatives the verb **to do** is added.

³Verb Grammar: an analytic approach - Now, Simple Always, Fact Form <http://www.held.com.br/resources/Verbtenses-AnalApp.html#Always>

⁴In this hand-out, the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) from the International Phonetic Association (also IPA) is used. To hear the sounds which are indicated by the characters of the IPA, click on the symbols in one of the following IPA charts.

- www.internationalphoneticassociation.org/IPAcharts/inter_chart_2018/IPA_2018.html
- www.seeingspeech.ac.uk/ click on [IPA charts]

<i>infinitive:</i>	to work				
<i>stem:</i>	work				
<i>singular</i>	<i>1st person</i>	stem	I	work.	
	<i>2nd person</i>	stem	You	work.	
	<i>3rd person</i>	stem+s	The rest	works.	
<i>plural</i>	<i>1st person</i>	stem	We	work.	
	<i>2nd person</i>	stem	You	work.	
	<i>3rd person</i>	stem	They	work.	

<i>infinitive:</i>		to work	to live	to miss	to wash
<i>singular:</i>					
<i>1st person</i>	I	work	live	miss	wash
<i>2nd person</i>	you	work	live	miss	wash
<i>3rd person</i>	the rest	works	lives	misses	washes
<i>plural:</i>					
<i>1st person</i>	we	work	live	miss	wash
<i>2nd person</i>	you	work	live	miss	wash
<i>3rd person</i>	they	work	live	miss	wash

Note: only the first verb of a clause can take **-s** for third person singular.

Examples:

James washes his own car.

Bob doesn't wash his own car.

not: ~~Bob doesn't washes his own car.~~

Does Mary wash her own car?

not: ~~Does Mary washes her own car?~~

Simple Past

For simple past only one **verb**, a **main verb** is used. In principle no **auxiliary verbs** are used. The exceptions are **questions** and **negatives** for which, in English, the **verb to have** has to be added to the sentence. To make the **past** form of **regular verbs -ed** is added at the end of the stem.

<i>stem:</i>	<i>past:</i>	
work	worked	[wɜːkt]

Of the added **-ed** the **e** is not pronounced, only the **-d**. After voiced consonants and vowels it is pronounced as [d], using the voice continues. After voiceless consonant it is pronounced as [t], not using the voice continues.

The **e** is pronounced only when the stem ends in a **t** or a **d**. It can be pronounced as [əd] or [ɪd]. The reason for this rule is that languages are in a constant evolution as efficient communication tools. Not pronouncing the **e** in normal regular verbs, doesn't cause any communication problems. That is why, in these cases, over time, this sound has disappeared.

In the case of regular verbs ending in a **t** or **d** and other verbs of which the last sound is [t] or [d], not pronouncing the **e** does cause a problem. It is almost impossible to pronounce two **d**'s, two **t**'s or **t** and **d** together. Pronouncing the added **-ed** as [əd] or [ɪd] helps pronunciation and it helps the listener to hear the added **d**.

Examples

<i>infinitive</i>	<i>stem</i>	<i>past</i>	
to add	add	added	[ʌdəd -ɪd]
to lift	lift	lifted	[lɪftəd -ɪd]

Enfos

The past form of a verb is the same for all persons.

singular:

<i>1st person</i>	I	worked.	I	lived.
<i>2nd person</i>	You	worked.	You	lived.
<i>3rd person</i>	The rest	worked.	The rest	lived.

plural:

<i>1st person</i>	We	worked.	We	lived.
<i>2nd person</i>	You	worked.	You	lived.
<i>3rd person</i>	They	worked.	They	lived.

<i>infinitive</i>	<i>stem</i>	<i>past</i>	
to work	work	worked	[wɜːkɪd]
to live	live	lived	[lɪvd]
to miss	miss	missed	[mɪst]
to wash	wash	washed	[wɒʃt wɔʃt]
to add	add	added	[ədəd -ɪd]
to lift	lift	lifted	[lɪftəd -ɪd]
to wait	wait	waited	[weɪtəd -ɪd]
to end	end	ended	[ɛndəd -ɪd]

Continuous

To make the **present** and **past continuous -ing** is added to the **stem** of the **main verb** and the **auxiliary verb to be** is placed before the **main verb**.

to be + stem-ing

The form stem-ing is called **present participle**.

Present Continuous

For **present continuous**, use a **present** form of **to be**.

<i>infinitive</i>		to work
<i>present participle</i>		working
<i>singular:</i>		
	I	am working
	you	are working
	the rest	is working
<i>plural:</i>		
	we	are working
	you	are working
	they	are working

<i>infinitive</i>		to live	
<i>present participle</i>		living	
<i>singular:</i>			
	I	am	living
	you	are	living
	the rest	is	living
<i>plural:</i>			
	we	are	living
	you	are	living
	they	are	living

Enfos

Past Continuous

For **past continuous**, use a **past** form of **to be**.

<i>infinitive</i>		to work	
<i>present participle</i>		working	
<i>singular:</i>			
	I	was	working
	you	were	working
	the rest	was	working
<i>plural:</i>			
	we	were	working
	you	were	working
	they	were	working

<i>infinitive</i>		to live	
<i>present participle</i>		living	
<i>singular:</i>			
	I	was	living
	you	were	living
	the rest	was	living
<i>plural:</i>			
	we	were	living
	you	were	living
	they	were	living

Perfect

The **perfect** tenses have the following form:

to have + past participle

Note: the **past participle** of a regular verb is the same as the **past** form of the verb: stem plus **-ed**. With irregular verbs, the past participle is often different from the past form.

Present Perfect

For the **present perfect**, use a **present** form of **to have** plus **past participle**.

to work	I	have	worked
	you	have	worked
	the rest	has	worked
	we	have	worked
	you	have	worked
	they	have	worked
to live		have/has	lived
to miss		have/has	missed
to wash		have/has	washed

Enfos

Past Perfect

For the **past perfect**, use the **past** form of to have plus **past participle**.

to work	I	had	worked
	you	had	worked
	the rest	had	worked
	we	had	worked
	you	had	worked
	they	had	worked
to live		had	lived
to miss		had	missed
to wash		had	washed

<i>infinitive</i>	<i>present participle</i>	<i>past tense</i>	<i>past participle</i>
to work	working	worked	worked
to live	living	lived	lived
to miss	missing	missed	missed
to wash	washing	washed	washed
to eat	eating	ate	ate
to give	giving	gave	given
to meet	meeting	met	met

Observations

Conjugation and spelling changes

Enfos

Correct use of the rules for conjugation of verbs, sometimes asks for changes in the spelling of the verb. See the following examples.

<i>infinitive</i>	to try	to hurry	to live	to wash
I /you	try	hurry	live	wash
the rest	tries [tɹaɪz]	hurries	lives [lɪvz]	washes [wɒʃəz]
we/they	try	hurry	live	wash
<i>present participle</i>	trying	hurrying	living	washing
<i>past</i>	tried	hurried	lived	washed
<i>past participle</i>	tried	hurried	lived	washed

<i>infinitive</i>	to lose	to pay	to see
I /you	lose	pay	see
the rest	loses	pays	sees
we/they	lose	pay	see
<i>present participle</i>	losing	paying	seeing [siŋ]
<i>past</i>	lost	paid	saw
<i>past participle</i>	lost	paid	seen [si:n]

This handout can be downloaded for free from: <https://www.held.com.br/resources/>