

Irregular verbs that stay the same

CEFR A2 • 20 questions • A4 / US Letter

One group of irregular verbs never adds -ed: cut, put, hit, let, set, shut, cost, hurt and read.

The rule

The never-changing group

- cut, put, hit, let, set, shut, cost, hurt, spread, split, burst, bet, quit.
- The three forms are identical: I cut today, I cut yesterday, I have cut.
- These verbs never take -ed in standard English. "Putted" and "hurted" are not words.
- The meaning stays the same; only the time word or the sentence changes.

Read: one spelling, two sounds

- The present sounds like "reed": I read the news every morning.
- The past simple and the past participle sound like "red": I read the news last night. I have read the news.
- The spelling is read in every form, so never write "readed".
- In speech, the vowel sound is the only clue to the tense.

Verbs that return to the base form in the participle

- come, came, come; run, ran, run; become, became, become.
- The middle form is different, but the third form is the same as the first.
- So "have come" and "have run" are correct, but "have came" and "have ran" are not.
- Compare this group with the same-form group: one changes only in the middle, the other never changes.

How to show the past when the verb does not change

- Use a finished time word: yesterday, last night, in 2019, two days ago.
- Use the past continuous around it: "I was cutting vegetables when the phone rang."
- Use the present perfect after have or has for a result that matters now: "I have cut my finger."
- In a story, the neighbouring verbs usually show the tense: "He came in, put down his bag and sat."

Common traps with cost, hurt and let

- Cost: "The ticket cost twenty euros", not "costed". Costed exists only for calculating a price in business English.
- Hurt: "I hurt my back", not "hurted".
- Let: "She let me go", not "letted".
- Shut and spread behave the same way: "shut the door", "spread the news".

Questions

Write your answer on the line under each question. Check your work with the answer key on the last page.

1. I ___ my finger while cooking yesterday.

2. She ___ the keys on the table last night.

3. The ball was ___ over the wall.

4. These days, he ___ the newspaper every morning.

5. I have ___ that book twice.

6. The ticket ___ twenty euros.

7. He ___ his back at the gym last week.

8. They have ___ home already.

9. My parents ___ me stay up late last Saturday.

10. The shop ___ at six yesterday evening.

11. She has ___ the news to everyone.

12. We ___ at the cafe for an hour.

13. He has ___ to the party with his brother.

14. I ___ the sign but I did not understand it.

15. She ___ me borrow her car last weekend.

16. How much did the tickets ___?

17. We were ___ vegetables when the phone rang.

18. He ___ the door quietly and left.

19. I have ___ twenty pounds on this game.

20. The children have ___ in the garden all day.

Answer key

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1. **cut** — Cut has the same form in the past simple; the time word yesterday shows the past.
2. **put** — Put never changes, so the past simple is the same as the base form.
3. **hit** — The passive uses the same form hit. Hit does not take -ed.
4. **reads** — The present with he adds -s: reads, pronounced like "reedz".
5. **read** — The participle of read is read, pronounced like "red". It never becomes readed.
6. **cost** — Cost keeps one form in the past: cost, cost, cost.
7. **hurt** — Hurt does not add -ed, so the past simple is hurt.
8. **run** — After have, run returns to the base form: run, ran, run.
9. **let** — Let has the same form in the past simple; letted is not a word.
10. **shut** — Shut keeps one form for the present and the past.
11. **spread** — Spread is the same in the past participle; spreaded is not standard.
12. **sat** — Sit is irregular: sit, sat, sat. The past simple is sat.
13. **come** — After has, use the participle come. Come, came, come.
14. **read** — The past simple of read is spelled read and pronounced like "red".
15. **let** — Let has the same form in the past simple: let, let, let.
16. **cost** — After did, the same-form verb cost keeps its base form: did the tickets cost.
17. **cutting** — The past continuous uses -ing: were cutting. The base form stays cut.
18. **shut** — Shut is the same in the past simple; shutted is not standard English.
19. **bet** — Bet keeps one form: bet, bet, bet.
20. **run** — After have, use the participle run, which returns to the base form.