Regular and Irregular Past Tense Verbs

1. Focus

Explain Regular and Irregular Past Tense Verbs

Say: We know that we use present tense verbs to write about something that is happening now, or in the present. Past tense verbs are verbs that tell us about an action that happened in the past. Regular past tense verbs end in -ed. To form most regular past tense verbs, we just add -ed. For example, talk becomes talked. If the present tense ends in e, we drop the e and add -ed. The present tense race becomes raced. If the present tense ends in a short vowel sound and a consonant, we double the consonant before adding -ed. Grab becomes grabbed. If the present tense verb ends in y, we change the y to i before adding -ed. Those are the rules for regular past tense verbs. But some verbs are irregular, and their past tense forms do not end in -ed, nor do they follow any pattern in their spelling changes. We have to memorize these irregular past tense verbs.

Model Using Regular and Irregular Past Tense Verbs

Say: Let’s look at a sentence from “Right Brain, Left Brain” that uses regular and irregular past tense verbs.

The experiment changed everything scientists knew about the human brain.

Modeling Text

Say: I’m going to underline the past tense verbs. I remember that regular past tense verbs end in -ed, like changed. The present tense form, change, ends in e, so to make the past tense I drop the e and add -ed. Knew is the past tense of know. This past tense form is irregular—it does not end in -ed. The only way I can know the spelling of this word is to memorize it, since it does not follow a spelling pattern.

Begin an anchor chart for regular and irregular past tense verbs that students can add to during the practice activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regular add -ed</th>
<th>Regular drop e, add -ed</th>
<th>Regular double consonant, add -ed</th>
<th>Regular change y to i, add -ed</th>
<th>Irregular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>walked</td>
<td>changed</td>
<td>dripped</td>
<td>worried</td>
<td>knew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>painted</td>
<td>behaved</td>
<td>grinned</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>said</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cleaned</td>
<td>escaped</td>
<td>stopped</td>
<td>tried</td>
<td>bought</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Regular and Irregular Past Tense Verbs Anchor Chart
2. Rehearse

Practice Regular and Irregular Past Tense Verbs

Invite students to form groups and to think of three regular past tense verbs and three irregular past tense verbs. Have groups share their results with the class. Add their past tense verbs to the anchor chart.

Ask students to form pairs and choose two regular and two irregular past tense verbs to use in written sentences.

If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

Share Practice Sentences

Invite pairs to share their sentences with the class. Discuss their responses. Ask the following questions:

- What regular and irregular past tense verbs did you use in your sentences?
- Did you find it hard to use either type of verb? Why or why not?

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that regular past tense verbs end in -ed. Irregular past tense verbs do not end in -ed. We have to memorize their spellings. Be sure to use the correct spelling of regular and irregular past tense verbs in your informational reports.

If you would like to give students additional practice using regular and irregular past tense verbs, have them complete BLM 4.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to read aloud their answers to BLM 4. Use students’ answers to provide corrective feedback. Ask students to share what they learned about regular and irregular past tense verbs.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning and Intermediate

Help students understand the difference between regular and irregular past tense verbs. Use two or three common verbs that students use in oral language (i.e., eat/ate, write/wrote, walk/walked). Draw a two-column chart on the board with the headings “Present Tense” and “Past Tense.” Write the present tense form of the verbs in the left column and the past tense in the right column. Point out the verbs that end in -ed and those that do not. Pantomime the actions if necessary to aid in student comprehension.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers to develop sentences. Make sure that students understand the meaning of each word before they begin the activity.