1. Focus

Explain Tricky Verbs

Say: The spelling of some verbs in English can be tricky. Tricky verbs are verbs that we find hard to remember how to form and use, for example, feel and its past tense form, felt. Sometimes when you use this verb, it just may not sound right, and you might second-guess yourself. Most tricky verbs are irregular, meaning that the past tense of the verb isn’t formed by adding -ed as with regular verbs. You just have to learn and memorize their spellings. Let’s look at some tricky verbs.

Model Using Tricky Verbs

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources, and read them aloud to students.

1. This year, I am going to lead the student council. Last year, I led the math club.
2. Today, I shake hands with my neighbor. Yesterday, I shook hands with the principal.

Modeling Text

After example 1. Say: The word lead is present tense. The past tense of lead is led. As you can see, this is an irregular verb. There is no way to know how to form the past tense unless you have memorized it.

After example 2. Say: Shake is another verb that I find hard to remember. The past tense is shook, which sometimes sounds funny when I use it in a sentence. But I’ve memorized it, so I know I’m using the right spelling.
2. Rehearse

Practice Using Tricky Verbs

Display the practice text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

Ask students to work with a partner to form the past tense of the verb in parentheses. (Students do not need to copy sentences.)

1. I (ride) the subway to work each morning.
2. My parents (give) me the biggest birthday party ever.
3. I (blow) out all of the candles on my cake.

Practice Text

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

Share Sentences with Tricky Verbs

Have volunteers come to the chart and write the correct past tense form of each verb. Discuss their choices as a class.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that some verbs are tricky. They are often irregular, so you can’t form the past tense by adding -ed. But these verbs may sound odd in any tense. You have to memorize their forms and uses. Remember to use and spell tricky verbs correctly as you write your memoirs.

If you would like to give students additional practice using tricky verbs, have them complete BLM 6.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to read aloud their answers to BLM 6. Provide corrective feedback as necessary.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Beginning ELs are not ready to work on this English grammar skill. While other students collaborate on the practice activity or write independently, meet one on one with students to support developmentally appropriate grammar skills based on their independent writing and language level. For example, you may want to work on students’ use of regular present and past tense verbs.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers to complete the practice activity. Make sure that students understand the meaning of each verb before they begin the activity. Use the following sentence frame to help students with their oral language:

_The past tense of this verb is _______._

All Levels

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: past/el pasado; verb/el verbo.