

Appendix 2. Irregular verbs, high and low vowel qualities

Most English verbs, except Modal, have three forms. The forms help express thought about the grammatical Time (**PRESENT**, **PAST** or **FUTURE**) and Aspect (**Simple**, **Progressive**, **Perfect**, or **Perfect Progressive**).

The first form can make the Present

Simple:

I write.

The second form can make the Past

Simple:

I wrote.

The third form can make
the Perfect:

I have written (Present);

I had written (Past).

I will have written (Future).

Regular verbs take the ending **-E D**, in the second and third forms. Irregular verbs may take various shapes, and these happen to have vowel patterns.

mean meant meant

read read read

{I:} {e:} {e:}

Outside English-speaking countries, these are mostly American English or British English that people learn. We may compare the two language

varieties here.

Some verbs are regular in American English, although they are irregular in British English, and the other way round.

Some verbs can be both regular and irregular in American: we include mostly standard shapes, but our notes are rather extensive. When a shape prevails in American, we mark it **EXT**, for *extensive*.

We mark forms more often to occur in British English as **BRE**, and those associated with American as **AE**.

Please note that literary American English may employ irregular verb forms for versatility, and stay with regular forms for everyday usage.

FIRST FORM	SECOND FORM	THIRD FORM
gild	gilded EXT / gilt	gilded EXT / gilt
learn	learned / learnt BRE	learned / learnt BRE

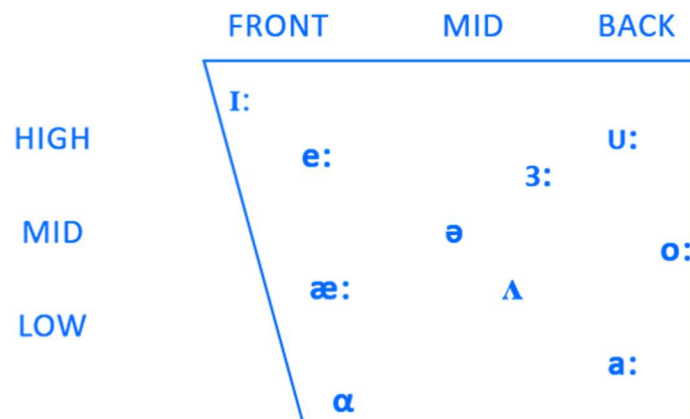
Let us remember that the speech sound **{L}** happens to be an individualist, in American English. Appendix 1 has more.

FIRST FORM	SECOND FORM	THIRD FORM
dial	dialled AE	dialled AE
	dialled BRE	dialled BRE

Most dictionaries list irregular verbs alphabetically, so we do not need to

repeat that here. We may look to *speech sound patterns*: they make remembering irregular forms much easier. We can begin with just reading a few verbs at a time. The phonetic script is generalized.

The vowel chart below is a general picture for high, mid, and low vowels in American English. Vowel height regards the position of the tongue in the mouth (high, mid, or low). Please mind that American English is a live language and live languages change. Vowel charts and verb lists may not last forever.



I(:)	reed, {I} bid	α	lark	o(:)	naught
e(:)	head	a(:)	car	u(:)	book
æ(:)	cat	ʌ	not	ɜ(:)	earth

The colon — {:} — marks the speech sounds we pronounce longer. Vowels often become a bit higher, when prolonged. Please compare “reed” {I:}, and “bid” {I}.

The symbol {ə} is for the **shwa**. It is a neutral vowel sound. We find it in

unstressed syllables. If stressed, the shwa most often becomes a full vowel. Some transcriptions consider {ʌ} a reduced speech sound, too. This is why the table presents it without the colon.

The **ash**, {æ}, joins speech sound qualities {e} and {ʌ}.

We may give stars to second and third *irregular* forms that *can* be of the same shapes in American. We do this to perceive, not to learn by rote.

1. Second and third form: {I}

{I:} — {I:} — {I:}

beat	beat	beaten
lean	leaned EXT / leant BRE	leaned EXT / leant BRE
leap	leaped EXT / leapt	leaped EXT / leapt

{I} — {I} — {I}



build	built	built
gild	gilded EXT / gilt	gilded EXT / gilt
gird	girded EXT / girt	girded EXT / girt
hit	hit	hit
knit	knitted / knit	knitted / knit
rid	ridded / rid	ridded / rid
spill	spilled EXT / spilt	spilled EXT / spilt



{AI} — {I} — {I}



bite	bit	bitten / bit
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ch i de	ch i d / chided	ch i d / chided / ch i dden
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h i de	h i d	h i dden / h i d
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l i ght	l i t / lighted	l i t / lighted
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sl i de	sl i d	sl i d
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2. Second and third form {u:}

{u:} — {u:} — {u:}



h e w	h e wed EXT / h e wn	h e wed EXT / h e wn
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pr o ve	pr o ved	pr o ved EXT / pr o ven
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str e w	str e wed	str e wed EXT / str e wn
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{æ:} — {u:} — {u:}



st a nd	st o od	st o od
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3. Second and third form: {ei}

{ei} — {ei} — {ei}



in a y	in a id	in a id / in a in BRE
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l a de	l a ded	l a ded EXT / l a den
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l a y	l a id	l a id / l a in BRE
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m a ke	m a de	m a de
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p a y	p a id	p a id
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sh a ve	sh a ved	sh a ved EXT / sh a ven
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{AI} — {ei} — {ei}

lie

lay

lain

4. Second and third form: {e}

{I:} — {e} — {e}

	ber ea ve	ber eft / bereaved	ber eft / bereaved
	ble ed	ble d	ble d
	br ee d	br ed	br ed
	de a l	de a lt	de a lt
	dr ea m	dr ea med AE / dr ea mt	dr ea med AE / dr ea mt
	fe ed	fe d	fe d
	fe el	fe lt	fe lt
	fl ee	fl ed	fl ed
	ke ep	ke pt	ke pt
	kn ee l	kn elt / kn ee led	kn elt / kn ee led
	le a d	le d	le d
	le a ve	le ft	le ft
	me a n	me a nt	me a nt
	me e t	me t	me t
	re a d	re a d	re a d
	sl ee p	sl ep t	sl ep t
	sp ee d	sp ed / sp ee ded	sp ed / sp ee ded
	sw ee p	sw ep t	sw ep t
	w ee p	w ep t	w ep t

Focus to speech sound *place* and *manner* can help learn. The sounds {p} and {b}, or {v} and {f} differ in voicing; {l} and {r} share much in place, similarly to {t} and {d}, or {n}, and {s}. We may compare verbs as “to beat”, “to lean”, or “to leap”.

{eɪ} — {e} — {e}



gainsay gainsaid gainsaid



say said said

{e} — {e} — {e}



bend bended / bent bended / bent



blend blended EXT / blent blended EXT / blent



bless blessed EXT / blest blessed EXT / blest



lend lent lent



rend rended / rent rended / rent



send sent sent



smell smelled EXT / smelt smelled EXT / smelt

spell spelled AE / spelt spelled AE / spelt



spend spent spent

{o} — {e} — {e}



hold held held

5. Second and third form {3:}

{ɪ:} — {3:} — {3:}



hear heard heard

{3:} — {3:} — {3:}



burn burned EXT / burnt burned EXT / burnt

learn learned / learnt BRE learned / learnt BRE

6. Second and third form {O}

{I:} — {OU} — {OU}



cleave cleaved EXT / clove/cleft cleaved EXT / cloven



freeze froze frozen



heave heaved EXT / hove heaved EXT / hove



speak spoke spoken



steal stole stolen



weave wove / weaved woven / weaved

{U:} — {OU} — {OU}



choose chose chosen

{EI} — {OU} — {OU}



break broke broken



stave staved EXT / stove staved EXT / stove



wake woke / waked woken / waked

{OU} — {OU} — {OU}



mow mowed mowed EXT / mown



sew sewed sewn / sewed AE



show showed shown / showed AE



sow sowed sown / sowed

{AI} — {OU} — {OU}



shine shone / shined AE shone / shined AE

{I:} — {O} — {O}



seek sought sought



teach taught taught



shear sheared EXT / shore sheared EXT / shorn

{I} — {O} — {O}



bring brought brought



think thought thought

{u:} — {O} — {O}



lose lost lost



shoe shod / shoed AE shod / shoed AE



shoot shot shot

{e} — {O} — {O}



bear bore borne / born



get got gotten AE / got



sell sold sold



swear swore sworn



tell told told



tear	tore	torn
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tread	trod	trodden
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wear	wore	worn
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{ɜː} — {o} — {o}



work	worked EXT / wrought	worked EXT / wrought
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{o} — {o} — {o}



saw	sawed	sawed EXT / sawn
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{æ} — {o} — {o}



catch	caught	caught
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{ʌ} — {o} — {o}



buy	bought	bought
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fight	fought	fought
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{oi} — {oi} — {oi}



spoil	spoiled	spoiled EXT / spoilt
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7. Second and third form: {ʌ}

{ɪ} — {ʌ} — {ʌ}



cling	clung	clung
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dig	dug	dug
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fling	flung	flung
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sling	slung	slung
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	sl i nk	sl u nk / slinked AE	sl u nk / slinked AE
	sp i n	sp u n	sp u n
	st i ck	st u ck	st u ck
	st i ng	st u ng	st u ng
	st i nk (TABOO)	st u nk (TABOO)	st u nk (TABOO)
	str i ng	str u ng	str u ng
	sw i ng	sw u ng	sw u ng
	w i n	w o n	w o n
	wr i ng	wr u ng	wr u ng

{æ} — {ʌ} — {ʌ}





	h a ng	h u ng / hanged AE	h u ng / hanged AE
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{ʌɪ} — {ʌ} — {ʌ}

	str i ke	str u ck	str u ck/stricken
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Right next to the high vowel quality {u}, the quality {ʌ} receives more emphasis; it can be listed as lower than {ʌ} alone.

{ʌɪ} — {ʌu} — {ʌu}

	b i nd	b o und	b o und
	f i nd	f o und	f o und
	gr i nd	gr o und	gr o und
	w i nd	w o und / w i nded	w o und

8. Second and third form: {æ}

		{I} — {æ} — {æ}	
☆☆	sit	sat	sat
☆☆	spit	spat / spit AE	spat / spit AE

		{æ} — {æ} — {æ}	
☆☆	have/has	had	had

9. “Cradle” third forms return to first form vowel qualities.

		{I:} — «» — {I:}	
	eat	ate	eaten
	be	was / were	been
	see	saw	seen

		{I} — «» — {I}	
	bid	bade / bid	bidden / bid
	give	gave	given

		{eI} — «» — {eI}	
	take	took	taken
	shake	shook	shaken

		{ou} — «» — {ou}	
	blow	blew	blown
	crow	crowed EXT / crew	crowed
	grow	grew	grown
	throw	threw	thrown

{o} — «» — {o}

draw	drew	drawn
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fall	fell	fallen
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{ʌ} — «» — {ʌ}

come	came	come
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run	ran	run
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To resolve on {ʌ}, patterns mostly have {I} or {æ} to begin with.

{I} — {æ} — {ʌ}

begin	began	begun
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drink	drank	drunk
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ring	rang	rung
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sing	sang	sung
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sink	sank	sunk
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shrink	shrank / shrunk	shrunk / shrunken
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spring	sprang / sprung	sprung
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swim	swam	swum
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There yet are exceptions.

do	did	done
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go	went	gone
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As a starting value, {ʌ} resolves mostly on {I}.

{ʌI} — {ou} — {I}

drive	drove	driven
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ride	rode	ridden
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rive	rived / rove BRE	rived EXT / riven
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rise	rose	risen
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shrive	shrove / shrived AE	shriven / shrived AE
smite	smote	smitten
stride	strode	stridden
strive	strived / strove	strived / striven
thrive	thrived EXT / throve	thrived EXT / thriven
write	wrote	written

There is an exception.

fly	flew	flown
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Some vowel patterns tend to become regular, in American.

swell	swelled	swelled EXT / swollen
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Some verbs are irregular by keeping one shape.

put	put	put
burst	burst EXT / bursted AE	burst EXT / bursted AE
hurt	hurt	hurt
bet	bet	bet
let	let	let
set	set	set
cost	costed AE / cost	costed AE / cost
broadcast	broadcasted AE / broadcast	broadcasted AE / broadcast
cast	cast	cast
cut	cut	cut
thrust	thrust	thrust

Speech sounds can make poetry. If interested, feel welcome to visit my

Internet Archive account, for Emily Dickinson,

archive.org/details/@teresapelka.