
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute Vocabulary

Irregular verbs 2



This is not a word-for-word transcript

Finn

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Vocabulary. I'm Finn.

Catherine

And I'm Catherine.

Finn

In today's programme we're talking about irregular verbs.

Catherine

Yes, and as you know, there are lots of irregular verbs in English.

Finn

Lots and lots. Some, like **write**, have different forms for the past simple and past participle: **wrote** and **written**.

Catherine

Yes and it's not always easy to remember all those different forms!

Finn

It's not. Today, though, we're going to explain how some of these verbs can be grouped into patterns to help remember the different forms.

Catherine

We'll give you lots of examples...

Finn

We'll have a quiz...

Catherine

...and we'll leave you with a top tip for learning vocabulary.

Finn

But first, let's hear my interview with singer-songwriter Andrea.

Catherine

While you listen, think about this question: Who hasn't spoken to Andrea for a long time?

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Finn

Hi, Andrea. Now, tell us: when did you **begin** to **sing**?

Andrea

I **sang** in the school choir and I **began** to sing in bands when I was just ten.

Finn

Oh, wow. So how many songs have you **written**

Andrea

Over a hundred. I **wrote** one just before I **drove** here.

Finn

Right. And Andrea, I'm sure you have **broken** many men's hearts. Tell us, who was the first?

Andrea

Oh, he was a boy called Marcus. I **knew** him at school. We **grew** up on the same street. He's not **spoken** to me since we **broke** up.

Finn

Since you broke up, that sounds bad. Thank you for coming and speaking to us today, Andrea.

Andrea

Thanks for having me.

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Finn

And there we are. So, we asked you: Who hasn't spoken to Andrea for a long time?

Catherine

And the answer is: Marcus. They haven't spoken since they **broke** up.

Finn

Broke is the past simple of the verb **break** and it belongs to our first group of verbs. It has the pattern **break, broke, broken**.

Catherine

That's right, the past simple is **broke** and the past participle is **broken**.

Finn

Listen to this clip. Can you hear another verb with the same pattern? Here's a clue. The word rhymes with **broken**.

INSERT CLIP I

Andrea

Oh, he was a boy called Marcus. I **knew** him at school. We **grew** up on the same street. He's not **spoken** to me since we **broke** up.

Catherine

OK, and **spoken** rhymes with **broken**. The verb **speak** forms its past simple and past participle in the same way as **break**.

Finn

So it's **speak, spoke, spoken...**

Catherine

And **speak** and **break** are pronounced differently although they both have e-a-k at the end.

Finn

They do. Now, another verb with the same pattern is **wake**.

Catherine

... so it's **wake, woke, woken**.

Finn

... although we spell **wake**, w-a-k-e. It's not spelt e-a-k at the end. Now, in the interview, we had two other verbs with a different pattern.

Catherine

That's right, we had the past forms **knew** and **grew**. Andrea **knew** Marcus at school and she **grew** up on the same street.

Finn

Yes. These are the past simple forms of **know** and **grow**.

Catherine

So, it's **know, knew, known...**

Finn

Grow, grew, grown...

Catherine

Another verb with this pattern is **blow**.

Finn

So it's **blow, blew, blown**.

Catherine

So we've got two groups. The first one is verbs like **speak, spoke, spoken...**

Finn

And we have in our second group, verbs like **grow, grew, grown**. Listen to this second clip and see if you can spot two more patterns. Here's a clue: listen to words that rhyme or have similar pronunciations.

INSERT CLIP 2

Finn

When did you **begin** to **sing**

Andrea

I **sang** in the school choir and I **began** to sing in bands when I was just ten.

Finn

Oh, wow. How many songs have you **written**?

Andrea

Over a hundred. I **wrote** one just before I **drove** here.

Catherine

Did you hear the patterns **begin... began** and **sing... sang**?

Finn

So, this pattern is **begin, began, begun...**

Catherine

Exactly, and we've got **sing, sang, sung...**

Finn

In the clip, we also had another pattern - **wrote... written**. So, that's the past simple and the past participle of **write**.

Catherine

We heard another verb with this pattern... **drove**, which is the past simple of **drive**.

Finn

And the past participle is...

Finn

... **driven**. So that's **drive, drove, driven**.

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Catherine

And now for a quiz. I'll give you two parts of a verb. You have to complete the pattern. Ready? Number one: swim, swam, _____.

Finn

...swum.

Catherine

Well done if you got that right. Number two: speak, _____, spoken.

Finn

...spoke.

Catherine

Correct. Number three: _____, wrote, written.

Finn

...write.

Catherine

And that's the end of the quiz. Well done if you got them right.

Finn

And now, today's top tip for learning vocabulary: combine irregular verbs with the same pattern in a short rhyme or story. The pattern of the rhyme will help you remember the different forms.

Catherine

There's more about this at bbclearningenglish.com. Join us again for more 6 Minute Vocabulary.

Both

Bye!

Vocabulary points to take away

Irregular verb patterns

Infinitive

begin

sing

break

speak

wake

blow

grow

know

drive

write

Past simple

began

sang

broke

spoke

woke

blew

grew

knew

drove

wrote

Past participle

begun

sung

broken

spoken

woken

blown

grown

known

driven

written