

Understanding the -ED Ending



Section 1

Introduction

What's so difficult about the –ED ending?

As an English teacher, learners often ask me, ‘When do we use the –ed ending?’

Most people have the idea that we use –ed for the past tense, but of course that is only part of the answer. The –ed ending has several different uses in English. This makes it confusing to the learner. When you see a word that ends in –ed, does it signify the past tense or not?

Perhaps the best way to make sure that you understand is to work through each use of the –ed ending step by step. That is what we are going to do here.

The different uses of the –ed ending are as follows:

- 1 Past tense
- 2 Perfect tenses
- 3 Certain adjectives
- 4 Passive voice
- 5 Clauses



Section 2

The -ed ending in the past tense

Learning to distinguish regular and irregular verbs

To form the past tense of many English verbs, we end the word in -ed. Let's see some examples:

I **walked** to school today.
 She **patted** the dog on its head.
 Gary **called** Tim to ask for advice.



There are many more verbs where we do not add the -ed ending. Instead, we usually change the word in some way:

I **ate** the fruit salad.
 She **felt** ill after work.
 Bart **spent** ten dollars on a new pen.

If we can add -ed to a verb, we call it a **regular verb**. If not, we call it an **irregular verb**. Here are a few more examples.

regular verbs	irregular verbs
walk / walked	take / took
slip / slipped	write / wrote
jump / jumped	steal / stole
push / pushed	put / put
shout / shouted	see / saw
press / pressed	teach / taught
touch / touched	let / let

Why does English have irregular verbs? Why don't we just end all verbs in -ed in the past tense? There are historical reasons for this. Many irregular verbs follow rules used in English as it was spoken many hundreds of years ago. Most everyday verbs are irregular and most formal or longer verbs are regular.

A more complete list of regular and irregular verbs can be found here:
www.roadtogrammar.com/verbs



Exercise 1

Which of these are regular verbs and can end in -ed?

Tick the boxes. Answers are on page 16.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> touch | <input type="checkbox"/> smell |
| <input type="checkbox"/> put | <input type="checkbox"/> learn |
| <input type="checkbox"/> set | <input type="checkbox"/> hold |
| <input type="checkbox"/> like | <input type="checkbox"/> say |
| <input type="checkbox"/> jog | <input type="checkbox"/> break |
| <input type="checkbox"/> take | <input type="checkbox"/> print |
| <input type="checkbox"/> phone | <input type="checkbox"/> enhance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> make | <input type="checkbox"/> bring |



Do you need more practice? Try many more exercises at www.roadtogrammar.com/edending

Section 2 cont.

When NOT to use the -ed ending

There are also times when we should NOT use the -ed ending when describing the past.

Example 1 He **did not post** the letter.

Example 2 **Did** he **post** the letter?

We can see from examples 1 and 2 that when we use the question form or the negative form of the past simple tense, we go back to using the base form of the verb:

Correct: Matt **did not open** the book.

Wrong: Matt **did not opened** the book.

When we have a combination of two verbs, only the first verb is in the past tense:



- Example 1 Shaun **tried to climb** in the window.
 Example 2 Lina **enjoyed eating** at the Café Del Bosco.

Example 1 is an infinitive: *to + base verb*. Example 2 is a gerund: *verb + -ing*.

When we describe a past ability, we also use the base verb:

- Wrong: She **can finished** a marathon when she was younger.
 Correct: She **could finish** a marathon when she was younger.

Finally, we sometimes use the other past tense – past continuous - to describe a longer or ongoing action in the past. When we use the past continuous tense, we do not use the past tense form of the verb. We use *was / were + verb + -ing*

- Example 1 She was reading the magazine.
 Example 2 I was enjoying the movie.

Exercise 2

Fill in the blanks with the correct form of the word

Answers are on page 16.

- | | | |
|----|--|----------|
| 1 | Did you _____ what just happened? | (see) |
| 2 | She liked _____ the swans. | (feed) |
| 3 | We _____ for an extension. | (ask) |
| 4 | When Bob was young, he could _____ like a pro. | (dance) |
| 5 | She _____ the cake in one sitting. | (finish) |
| 6 | They didn't _____ how to speak Dutch. | (know) |
| 7 | Pete and Bob _____ a band. | (form) |
| 8 | When I entered the room, she was _____ . | (cook) |
| 9 | She was cooking when I _____ the kitchen. | (enter) |
| 10 | Someone _____ the dogs loose. | (let) |
| 11 | I _____ her immediately after I got the news. | (call) |
| 12 | Sue wondered what she would _____. | (say) |
| 13 | Bart _____ to leave the house. | (refuse) |
| 14 | They _____ us for dinner. | (invite) |
| 15 | Sue refused _____ on Friday 13. | (travel) |



Section 3

Perfect tenses



-ED in past participles

As well as in the past tense, verbs with –ED endings come up in the perfect tenses. There are three basic perfect tenses in English:

Present perfect:	I have completed the marathon.
Past perfect:	Julie had known about the issue for a while.
Future perfect:	She will have graduated by April.

In each of the perfect tenses, the **past participle** form of the verb is used. As we can see from the table below, the past participle is sometimes spelled with an –ED ending and sometimes not. Generally speaking, if the past tense form of the verb is spelled with –ED, then the past participle will be spelled with –ED.

present	past	past participle
take	took	taken
write	wrote	written
steal	stole	stolen
walk	walked	walked
slip	slipped	slipped
teach	taught	taught
let	let	let

Once again, it is important to understand that the –ED ending is not only used for past actions. With the perfect tenses, we use –ED verbs for present and future actions, too.



Exercise 3

Choose the best option to complete the sentence:

Answers are on page 17.

1 Mike _____ for a job as a waiter.

- a) has applied b) has apply c) has applying

2 I have just _____ from my holiday.

- a) return b) returned c) returning

3 Norman and Jane _____ their wedding.

- a) have postponed b) have postpone c) has postponed

4 Recently, people _____ him with a new girlfriend.

- a) had spotted b) will have spotted c) have spotted

5 By next year, work on the skyscraper _____.

- a) had finished b) has finished c) will have finished

6 By the time I arrived at the station, the train _____.

- a) had departed b) has departed c) will have departed

7 Shaun _____ in LA for six months and he loves it.

- a) had lived b) has lived c) will have lived

8 Jeanie _____ in LA for three years before she found an acting job.

- a) had lived b) has lived c) will have lived



9 People are happy because the government _____ tax cuts.

- a) **had announced** b) **has announced** c) **will have announced**

10 Do you think Mark _____ when he returns from Paris?

- a) **had improved** b) **has improved** c) **will have improved**

For more practice on the present perfect tense: <http://www.roadtogrammar.com/presperfect/>

Past perfect notes: <http://www.roadtogrammar.com/notes/notes21.htm#145>

Future perfect notes: <http://www.roadtogrammar.com/notes/notes35.htm#247>

Section 4

Adjectives

Certain adjectives end in –ED

Certain adjectives can end in –ED, but which ones?

And how would we know they are adjectives?

Let's see some examples:

- a) I felt frustrated when the judge wouldn't listen.
- b) I sometimes get annoyed at my coworkers.
- c) Jerry is excited about the upcoming match.

What can we observe about the sentences above:

1 The –ED ending does not affect the tense. These sentences can be in the past, present or future tenses

2 Adjectives with –ED endings tend to describe feelings. You can feel frustrated, excited, pleased, annoyed, bored, relieved, shocked, surprised, terrified and so on.

3 Adjectives with –ED endings are derived from verbs. Frustrated, annoyed and excited are adjectives, but we can also use these words as verbs:

- a) It frustrates me when I can't get through to people.
- b) He annoys everyone with his stupid jokes.
- c) It excites people to see great special effects in movies.



As you can see, these words are somehow awkward to use as verbs and therefore, we prefer to use them in adjective form.

4 Adjectives with –ED endings almost always have a corresponding –ING adjective. For example:

- a) It was a frustrating day.
- b) What an annoying salesman!
- c) It was a really exciting rollercoaster ride!

We can see that –ED adjectives tend to describe feelings, and –ING adjectives describe the events or things that produce these feelings:

It was a frustrating day. I felt frustrated.
What an annoying salesman. I felt annoyed with him.

5 You may also notice that when we use an adjective with an –ED ending, the sentence structure is very similar to the passive voice construction:

Passive: He was bullied by the other kids.
Adjective: He was annoyed when he saw the other kids.

In fact, these adjectives are sometimes called participial adjectives. With the –ED ending, they are ‘passive’ and with the –ing ending, they are ‘active’.

6 Here is a list of some of the adjectives that we use in this way:

Alarmed	Distressed	Pleased
Aggravated	Disturbed	Relaxed
Amused	Embarrassed	Relieved
Annoyed	Encouraged	Satisfied
Astonished	Entertained	Shocked
Astounded	Excited	Sickened
Bored	Exhausted	Soothed
Captivated	Frightened	Surprised
Challenged	Frustrated	Tempted
Charmed	Fulfilled	Terrified
Comforted	Gratified	Threatened
Confused	Inspired	Thrilled
Convinced	Insulted	Tired
Depressed	Interested	Touched
Disappointed	Moved	Troubled
Discouraged	Overwhelmed	Unsettled
Disgusted	Perplexed	Worried



Exercise 4

Complete the sentences with the –ed or –ing forms of the adjectives:

Answers are on page 17.

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1 I felt _____ after listening to the professor's explanation. | (confusing/confused) |
| 2 She felt so _____ that she didn't even want to get out of bed. | (depressing/depressed) |
| 3 What a _____ movie! | (boring/bored) |
| 4 The _____ little kitten hid under the sofa. | (frightening/frightened) |
| 5 It was a _____ experience for the kitten. | (frightening/frightened) |
| 6 It was _____ when they saw my baby photos. | (embarrassing/embarrassed) |
| 7 Jock was _____ after the long journey. | (exhausting/exhausted) |
| 8 It was a _____ discovery. | (shocking/shocked) |
| 9 It was a really _____ holiday | (amazing/amazed) |
| 10 I was _____ that she broke her promise. | (annoying/annoyed) |
| 11 I thought the movie would be good, but it was _____. | (disappointing/disappointed) |
| 12 She was _____ to get a Christmas card from him. | (surprising/surprised) |

Section 5

Passives

Past participles are used in the passive voice

Many sentences in English can be expressed both in the active and in the passive voice:

Jack kicked the ball.	(active)
The ball was kicked.	(passive)

In simple terms, in active voice, the subject of the sentence carries out the action. In passive voice, the subject has an action carried out upon it.

The passive voice can be used with any tense or time as well as modal verbs, gerunds and infinitives:

The ball was kicked .	(simple past tense)
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The ball was being kicked .	(past continuous tense)
The food is cooked in the morning.	(present tense)
It should be served cold.	(modal verb – should)
She wants to be asked again.	(infinitive)
He will be given another chance.	(future simple form)

No matter which tense or form we use, the structure is:

BE Verb + past participle.

Of course, when we say the BE verb, that means it could be *was, were, will be, should be, to be*; there are many different combinations.

We use the past participle (see page 6). This means the passive voice may or may not have an –ED ending. Once again, the –ED ending does not signify the past tense. As mentioned, the passive voice can be used with any tense.

Exercise 5

Change these sentences from the active to the passive voice:

Answers are on page 18.

- 1 Jeremy asked me to sign the form.
- 2 We finished the project just on time.
- 3 We were helping the old lady.
- 4 He cooks the waffles early in the morning.
- 5 She will announce the winner on live TV.
- 6 You should warn him about the disaster.
- 7 Jason brought the flowers here.
- 8 The police have arrested the crook.
- 9 We are making good progress.
- 10 I can't sell it.
- 11 People ignored the beggar.
- 12 People were ignoring the beggar.



Section 6

Clauses

Relative clauses can be reduced

Many clauses in English begin with an –ED verb. Here are some examples:

- a) The guy **ignored by everyone** was my neighbor.
- b) **When prevented from entering**, Jack got very upset.
- c) **Concerned about the weather**, he chose to wear his coat.
- d) **Asked to give a speech**, he refused point-blank.

Let's look at our examples one at a time:

- A) The guy **ignored by everyone** was my neighbor.

This is a reduction of the sentence: The guy **who was ignored by everyone** was my neighbor.

There is a rule in English grammar that a relative clause may be reduced if it contains who/which/that followed by the BE verb. Here are some more examples:

This is the house that was designed by Ferrero Luiz.
This is the house designed by Ferrero Luiz.

The car that was parked there last night is gone.
The car parked there last night is gone.

The violin, which was invented over a thousand years ago, is a classical instrument.
The violin, invented over a thousand years ago, is a classical instrument.

- B) **When prevented from entering**, Jack got very upset.

Again, this is a reduction of: **When he was prevented from entering**, Jack got very upset.

The same rule we saw that applies to who, which or that, can be applied to *when* or *if*. The key is that *the subject must be the same in both clauses*. Let's see some more examples:

If he is given work, he will refuse to do it.
If given work, he will refuse to do it.



If Joe is given work, Mary will complain.
 Incorrect: If given work, Mary will complain.

C) **Concerned about the weather**, he chose to wear his coat.

In example C, the phrase *because he was* is left out and the sentence is reduced.

Here is another example:

Because she was told to come early, she arrived at six in the morning.
 Told to come early, she arrived at six in the morning.

D) **Asked to give a speech**, he refused point-blank.

In our final example, the phrase *when he was* is left out and the sentence is reduced.

Here is another example:

When Bob was fired from his job, he was extremely upset.
 Fired from his job, he was extremely upset.

Reducing sentences in this way is usually done in written English and is rarely done in spoken English (although there is no rule that you can't).



Exercise 6

Which of these sentences are correct?

Answers are on page 18.

- 1 This is the house designed by Ferrero Luiz.
- 2 Abandoned as a baby, Ralph was raised in an orphanage.
- 3 Ralph was raised in an orphanage, abandoned as a baby.
- 4 If reduced to eight men, they will never win the match.
- 5 I have a friend was asked to go for jury duty.
- 6 If was trapped in a lift, you should shout for help.



7 Animals that trapped in a corner can become dangerous.

8 Animals trapped in a corner can become dangerous.

9 Asked him to give a speech, he refused point-blank.

10 When awarded the prize, he smiled happily.

Section 7

Summary

Wrapping it up

In summary, these are the situations where we would use the –ED ending:

1 Past tense of regular verbs:

The letter **arrived** three days late.

2 Perfect tenses (regular verbs):

He **has completed** the task.

Mark **had announced** the winner.

Beth **will have trained** all summer.

3 Certain adjectives that describe feelings:

I felt **disappointed** when I saw the results.

She's **annoyed** with him.

4 Passive voice:

These cars **are manufactured** by Toyota.

The stamps **can be purchased** at the front counter.

5 Certain clauses that have been reduced:

Handled properly, the chemicals are not dangerous.



Exercise 7

Add –ED to the following sentences where necessary.

Answers are on page 19.

1. The movie we saw finish at 3:00.
2. I have always want to be a star.
3. The book was really disappointing.
4. Wong is interest in photography.
5. Pets abuse by their owners may bear mental scars.
6. The gallery is inspect once a year.
7. When ask to leave, Jill flew into a rage.
8. I talk to the boss before I left.
9. She is crying because she is scare.
10. If you feel confuse, you can check it on the Internet.
11. Did you buy the car that you look at the other day?
12. She had insist that I carry her bags.
13. By the end of the summer, I will have live here for two years.
14. They never ask permission before they leave early.
15. Convince Joe was the murderer, the police continue to ask him questions.
16. Priority will be award to those projects that are expect to bring in the most revenue.



Section 8

Answer key

Exercise 1

Which of these are regular verbs and can end in -ed?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> touched | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> smelled |
| <input type="checkbox"/> put | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> learned |
| <input type="checkbox"/> set | <input type="checkbox"/> hold |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> liked | <input type="checkbox"/> say |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> jogged | <input type="checkbox"/> break |
| <input type="checkbox"/> take | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> printed |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> phoned | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> enhanced |
| <input type="checkbox"/> make | <input type="checkbox"/> bring |

Exercise 2

Fill in the blanks with the correct form of the word

- 1 Did you **see** what just happened?
- 2 She liked **feeding/to feed** the swans.
- 3 We **asked** for an extension.
- 4 When Bob was young, he could **dance** like a pro.
- 5 She **finished** the cake in one sitting.
- 6 They didn't **know** how to speak Dutch.
- 7 Pete and Bob **formed** a band.
- 8 When I entered the room, she was **cooking**.
- 9 She was cooking when I **entered** the kitchen.
- 10 Someone **let** the dogs loose.
- 11 I **called** her immediately after I got the news.
- 12 Sue wondered what she would **say**.
- 13 Bart **refused** to leave the house.
- 14 They **invited** us for dinner.
- 15 Sue refused **to travel** on Friday 13.



Exercise 3

Choose the best option to complete the sentence:

1 Mike _____ for a job as a waiter.

a) **has applied**

2 I have just _____ from my holiday.

b) **returned**

3 Norman and Jane _____ their wedding.

a) **have postponed**

4 Recently, people _____ him with a new girlfriend.

c) **have spotted**

5 By next year, work on the skyscraper _____.

c) **will have finished**

6 By the time I arrived at the station, the train _____.

a) **had departed**

7 Shaun _____ in LA for six months and he loves it.

b) **has lived**

8 Jeanie _____ in LA for three years before she found an acting job.

a) **had lived**

9 People are happy because the government _____ tax cuts.

b) **has announced**

10 Do you think Mark _____ when he returns from Paris?

c) **will have improved**

Exercise 4

Complete the sentences with the –ed or –ing forms of the adjectives:

1 I felt **confused** after listening to the professor's explanation.

2 She felt so **depressed** that she didn't even want to get out of bed.

3 What a **boring** movie!

4 The **frightened** little kitten hid under the sofa.

5 It was a **frightening** experience for the kitten.

6 It was **embarrassing** when they saw my baby photos.

7 Jock was **exhausted** after the long journey.

8 It was a **shocking** discovery.

9 It was a really **amazing** holiday

10 I was **annoyed** that she broke her promise.

11 I thought the movie would be good, but it was **disappointing**.

12 She was **surprised** to get a Christmas card from him.



Exercise 5

Change these sentences from the active to the passive voice:

Answers:

- 1 I was asked to sign the form.
- 2 The project was finished just on time.
- 3 The old lady was being helped.
- 4 The waffles are cooked early in the morning.
- 5 The winner will be announced on live TV.
- 6 He should be warned about the disaster.
- 7 The flowers were brought here.
- 8 The crook has been arrested.
- 9 Good progress is being made.
- 10 it can't be sold.
- 11 The beggar was ignored.
- 12 The beggar was being ignored.

Exercise 6

Which of these sentences are correct?

- Correct:** 1 This is the house designed by Ferrero Luiz.
Correct: 2 Abandoned as a baby, Ralph was raised in an orphanage.
Wrong: 3 Ralph was raised in an orphanage, abandoned as a baby.
Correct: 4 If reduced to eight men, they will never win the match.
Wrong: 5 I have a friend was asked to go for jury duty.
Wrong: 6 If was trapped in a lift, you should shout for help.
Wrong: 7 Animals that trapped in a corner can become dangerous.
Correct: 8 Animals trapped in a corner can become dangerous.
Wrong: 9 Asked him to give a speech, he refused point-blank.
Correct: 10 When awarded the prize, he smiled happily.



Exercise 7

Add –ED to the following sentences where necessary.

1. The movie we saw **finished** at 3:00.
2. I have always **wanted** to be a star.
3. The book was really disappointing.
4. Wong is **interested** in photography.
5. Pets **abused** by their owners may bear mental scars.
6. The gallery is **inspected** once a year.
7. When **asked** to leave, Jill flew into a rage.
8. I **talked** to the boss before I left.
9. She is crying because she is **scared**.
10. If you feel **confused**, you can check it on the Internet.
11. Did you buy the car that you **looked** at the other day?
12. She had **insisted** that I carry her bags.
13. By the end of the summer, I will have **lived** here for two years.
14. They never ask permission before they leave early.
15. **Convinced** Joe was the murderer, the police **continued** to ask him questions.
16. Priority will be **awarded** to those projects that are **expected** to bring in the most revenue.

