

Episode 027 – Grammar

Past participles of irregular verbs

The past participle is part of a verb form used to create compound tenses. You're already familiar with how the past participle of regular verbs is formed.

For irregular verbs, the past participles also usually begin with a prefix, **ge-** but they don't have a **-t** at the end. Instead they end with **-en**.

regular

ge- + verb stem + **-t**

irregular

ge- + verb stem + **-en**

üben – ich habe **geübt**

sehen – ich habe **gesehen**

lesen – ich habe **gelesen**

Frequently there is also a vowel change in the stem. It's easiest if you learn the irregular verbs along with their past participles.

Examples:

trinken – ich habe **getrunken**

liegen – ich habe **gelegen**

saufen – ich habe **gesoffen**

gehen – ich bin **gegangen**

Harry – gefangen in der Zeit

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Past participles of inseparable verbs

Verbs that have no emphasis on the prefix - in other words that cannot be separated - are called inseparable verbs. Their past participles are formed without the prefix **ge-**. Regular verbs end with **-t** and irregular verbs end with **-en**.

Regular, inseparable verb
prefix + verb stem + **-t**

Irregular, inseparable verb
prefix + verb stem+ **-en**

besuchen – *Ich habe dich **besucht**.*

verlassen – *Ich habe dich **verlassen**.*

There can also be a stem change in inseparable verbs if they are irregular:

verstehen – *Ich habe dich **verstanden**.*

"sein" or "haben"?

The perfect tense of most verbs is formed with the helping verb "haben". For the most part, they are verbs that can take an accusative object.

Example:

besuchen Du **hast** einen Kollegen **besucht**.

Some verbs require the helping verb "sein" to form the perfect. These are mainly verbs that involve a change of location or condition. The helping verb is conjugated in the present tense and the past participle remains unchanged.

Harry – gefangen in der Zeit

Begleitmaterialien

Examples:

gehen

fahren

fliegen

Ich **bin** nicht ins Kino **gegangen**.

Wir **sind** nach Hamburg **gefahren**.

Er **ist** nach Traponia **geflogen**.

More:

The past participle of separable verbs

Verbs that have an emphasis on the prefix are called separable verbs because the conjugated form can be separated from their prefix. You're already familiar with such verbs. Their past participles are formed differently than normal verbs. With separable verbs, the **ge-** comes after the separable prefix.

The participle ending is **-t** for regular verbs and **-en** for irregular verbs.

Regular, separable verb

prefix + **ge-** + verb stem + **-t**

zuhören – ich habe **zugehört**

aufmachen – ich habe **aufgemacht**

Irregular, separable verb

prefix + **ge-** + verb stem + **-en**

anfangen – ich habe **angefangen**

aufessen – ich habe **aufgegessen**

There can also be a stem change in separable verbs if they are irregular:

aufstehen – ich bin **aufgestanden**

losgehen – ich bin **losgegangen**