

and the subsequent verbs, if any, are nonfinite. In a nonfinite verb phrase, on the other hand, all verbs are nonfinite; eg:

Calling early, she found him at home.

Called early, he ate a quick breakfast.

Having been called early, he felt sleepy all day.

Here are the verb forms with their syntactic functions:

1 The BASE FORM (*call*) is a FINITE verb in:

- (i) the present tense in all persons and numbers except 3rd person singular (which has the -s form): *I/you/we/they call regularly.*
- (ii) the imperative: *Call at once!*
- (iii) the present subjunctive: *They demanded that she call and see them.*

It is a NONFINITE verb in:

- (i) the bare infinitive: *He may call tonight.*
- (ii) the to-infinitive: *We want her to call.*

2 The -s FORM (*calls*) is a FINITE verb in the 3rd person singular present tense: *He/She calls every day.*

3 The -ING PARTICIPLE (*calling*) is a NONFINITE verb in:

- (i) the progressive aspect following BE: *He's calling her now.*
- (ii) -ing participle clauses: *Calling early, I found her at home.*

4 The PAST FORM (*called*) is a FINITE verb in the past tense: *Someone called yesterday.*

5 The -ED PARTICIPLE (*called*) is a NONFINITE verb in:

- (i) the perfect aspect following HAVE: *He has called twice today.*
- (ii) the passive voice following BE: *Her brother is called John.*
- (iii) -ed participle clauses: *Called early, he ate a quick breakfast.*

The -ing and -s forms of all verbs

3.4 The -ing and -s forms are almost invariably predictable from the base of both regular and irregular verbs. The -ing inflection is merely added to the base (but cf 3.6):

walk ~ walking push ~ pushing

The -s inflection has three pronunciations:

1 /ɪz/ after bases ending in voiced or voiceless sibilants, eg:

pass ~ passes budge ~ budes
buzz ~ buzzes push ~ pushes
catch ~ catches camouflage ~ camouflages

In these cases, the -s form always ends in -es.

2 /z/ after bases ending in other voiced sounds, eg:

call ~ calls flee ~ flees try ~ tries

3 /s/ after bases ending in other voiceless sounds, eg:

cut ~ cuts hop ~ hops lock ~ locks

The spelling rules for the -ing and -s forms are detailed in 3.6ff. The rules for the -s forms are the same as for the regular plural of nouns (cf 5.36).

NOTE

[a] Notice the irregular -s forms of *say* /seɪ/ ~ *says* /sez/, *have* ~ *has*, *do* /du:/ ~ *does* /dɒz/ and derivatives of *do*, eg: *outdo* /-du:/ ~ *outdoes* /-dɒz/. The -s form of *be* is highly irregular: *is*.

[b] Syllabic /l/ usually ceases to be syllabic before the -ing inflection, eg: *wriggle ~ wriggling*.

The -ed forms of regular verbs

3.5 The -ed forms of regular verbs have three pronunciations:

(a) /ɪd/ after bases ending in /d/ and /t/, eg:

pad ~ padded /-dɪd/ pat ~ patted /-tɪd/

(b) /d/ after bases ending in voiced sounds other than /d/, including vowels, eg:

buzz ~ buzzed /-ɪd/ budge ~ budged /-ɪdʒd/
call ~ called /-ɪd/ tow ~ towed /-əʊd/

(c) /t/ after bases ending in voiceless sounds other than /t/, eg:

pass ~ passed /-st/ pack ~ packed /-kt/

The spelling of regular verb inflections

Doubling of consonant before -ing and -ed

3.6 A single consonant letter at the end of the base is doubled before -ing and -ed when the preceding vowel is stressed and spelled with a single letter:

bar ~ 'barring ~ barred oc 'cur ~ oc 'curring ~ oc 'curred

There is normally no doubling when the preceding vowel is unstressed ('enter ~ 'entering ~ 'entered, 'visit ~ 'visiting ~ 'visited) or is written with two letters (*dread ~ dreading ~ dreaded*).

For some exceptions, see the Notes below.

NOTE

[a] BrE breaks the rule by doubling after unstressed syllables ending in -l, -m, and -p; doubling is less usual in AmE.

travel ~ travelling, travelled (BrE and AmE)

~ traveling, traveled (AmE only)

program(me) ~ programming, programmed (BrE and AmE)

~ programing, programed (AmE only)

worship ~ worshipping, worshipped (BrE and AmE)

~ worshipping, worshiped (AmE only)

The verbs *handicap* and *kidnap* follow the pattern of *worship*, but most other verbs ending in -p follow the regular rule in both AmE and BrE, eg: *develop, envelop, gallop, gossip*.