

STANDARD FORMS: REGULAR VERBS

Standard English verbs change in two major ways:

- (1) The plain form appears after *I* and *you*, and after any subject in the plural: *I talk*, *you talk*; the girls *talk*, several people *talk*, children *talk*. The *-s* form appears after *he*, *she*, or *it*, or whenever we talk about what *one* third party (not *I* or *you*) does *now*: *he talks*, *she talks*, the teacher *talks*, my cousin *talks* (**third person singular**).

Plain Form: *I write*, *we pray*, *they argue*; his sisters *work*, monks *mediate*
Third Person, Present: *She writes*, *he prays*, his mother *argues*, Jean *works*, the monks *meditates*

Note that for third person, present time, *do* changes to *does*; *don't* changes to *doesn't*:

Plain Form: *I don't write*; these bears *don't hibernate*
Third Person, Present: *She doesn't write*; this bears *doesn't hibernate*

- (2) For action in the **past**, many everyday verbs change from the plain form to the form with *-d* or *-ed*. Use the past form *regardless* of who the subject is. Note the change in spelling in words like *study-studied*, *apply-applied*, *testify-testified*, and in words like *drop-dropped*, *stop-stopped*, *plan-planned*.

Present: *we arrive*, *they copy*, *I believe*, planes *crash*
Past: *we arrived*, *they copied*, *I believed*, the plan *crashed*

A. Each of the following sets puts a regular English verb through its paces. In the first blank, fill in the plain form or the *-s* form as appropriate. In the second blank, fill in the past form. In the third blank, fill in *don't* or *doesn't* as appropriate.

1. I always *walk* to school. My sister also _____ to school. My father _____ to school in his day. My brothers _____ walk anywhere.
2. Each morning my brothers *start* to complain. My younger brother's car never _____. I _____ it for him yesterday. It's not my fault if his car _____ start.
3. My friends *work* during the summer. My best friend now _____ at night. Last summer, he _____ at a gas station. But he _____ work there anymore.
4. Americans frequently *protest* against injustices. Minorities _____ against inequality. The colonists _____ against unfair taxation. My friends _____ protest against anything.

5. Arguments *divide* families. The Mississippi _____ the country. The bandits _____ the loot. Some businesses _____ divide the profits fairly.
6. Small children *ask* many questions. My little sister now _____ everybody what everything is. Yesterday she _____ me about the stars. My big sister _____ ask me about anything.
7. Many American *investigate* their fellow citizens. Big corporations _____ job applicants. Last year Congress _____ big corporations. I hope this college _____ investigate students.
8. Many workers *complain* about their jobs. My cousin always _____ about working conditions. Before his accident, he always _____ about his insurance payments. He _____ complain anymore.
9. New reassurance *open* everyday. Sometimes a famous chef _____ a restaurant of his own. The most famous restaurant in town _____ in 1906. It _____ open on Mondays.
10. Americans love to *organize* thing. Churches _____ picnics. The unions _____ the workers. Some people _____ organize their thoughts.

B. Circle the right choice.

11. My brother always *talk / talks* in his sleep.
12. Last year, the government *ban / banned* several pesticides.
13. Some people never *share / shares* their good fortune with anyone.
14. Last month, the mother *announce / announced* the engagement.
15. Many recent immigrants *doesn't / don't* speak English.
16. My cousin always *sympathize / sympathizes* with the underdog.
17. This morning, a detective *question / questioned* the neighbors.
18. Our country *doesn't / don't* recognize your new government.
19. All my friends *appreciate / appreciates* your help.
20. This week, the county fair *close / closes* its door.