



The Fundamentals of Applied Linguistics: Communication through Language

Chapter 5 **Phonology**

Preparing the Way: Teaching ELs in the PreK-12 Classroom

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Part V. Past Tense Rules

ESOL in Higher Ed

<http://esolinhighered.org>

Visualization

A tropical beach scene with turquoise water, white sand, and palm trees under a blue sky. The word "Visualization" is written in a large, bold, blue serif font in the upper left quadrant. In the lower right quadrant, three lines of text in a smaller, italicized blue serif font are displayed.

Linguistics is easy.

Linguistics is fun.

Linguistics is logical.

Essential Question:

What should you know about the
Past Tense Rules in English in
order to effectively serve ELs?



PHONOLOGY: Past Tense Rule

Phonology is the study of how the sounds of a given language are organized.

For example, what is the rule for the formation of regular past tense verbs in English?

If you answered, “Just add –ed,” you would only be partially correct. Do you know why?

What is the topic of this unit of study? **PHONOLOGY**

Adding –ed to the end of a regular present tense verb in English is a **SPELLING** rule, not a **PHONOLOGICAL** rule.

PHONOLOGY: Past Tense Rule

First transcribe the following verbs in their present tense form.

laugh

læf

chuckle

tʃʌkəl

Analyze the PRESENT tense form of the verb “laugh.”

- “Laugh” ends in /f/.
- What kind of consonant is /f/? **a labio-dental fricative**
- Is /f/ voiced or voiceless?
voiceless

Analyze the PRESENT tense form of the verb “chuckle.”

- “Chuckle” ends in /l/.
- What kind of consonant is /l/? **an alveolar liquid**
- Is /l/ voiced or voiceless?
voiced

PHONOLOGY: Past Tense Rule

Now transcribe the **past tense** form of each verb.

laugh

læf

laughed

læft

chuckle

tʃʌkəl

chuckled

tʃʌkəld

“Laughed” ends in /t/.

- What kind of consonant is /t/? **an alveolar stop**
- Is /t/ voiced or voiceless?
voiceless

- “Chuckled” ends in /d/.
- What kind of consonant is /d/? **an alveolar stop**
- Is /d/ voiced or voiceless?
voiced

PHONOLOGY: Past Tense Rule

Now transcribe the **past tense** form of each verb.

laugh

læf

laughed

læft

chuckle

tʃʌkəl

chuckled

tʃʌkəld

Notice that when a present tense verb ends in a voiceless consonant, the past tense marker is also voiceless.

wish / wished ask / asked wrap / wrapped toss / tossed

And, when a present tense verb ends in a voiced consonant, the past tense marker is also voiced.

nab / nabbed gag / gagged hum / hummed turn / turned

PHONOLOGY: Past Tense Rule

Transcribe the present tense verbs;
then add the past tense symbol.

watch	watʃ	t	budge	bʌdʒ	d
sass			whiz		
lick			log		
fluff			wave		
pump			comb		
woosh			triage		

PHONOLOGY: Past Tense Rule

Transcribe the present tense verbs;
then add the past tense symbol.

watch	watʃ	t	budge	bʌdʒ	d
sass	sæs	t	whiz	wɪz	d
lick	lɪk	t	log	lɒg	d
fluff	flʌf	t	wave	wev	d
pump	pʌmp	t	comb	kɒm	d
woosh	wuʃ	t	trriage	trɪaɜ	d

PHONOLOGY: Past Tense Rule

There is one more part to the past tense rule:
verbs that end in /t/ or /d/ require the past tense ending
/ɪd/

fit	fitted	fɪtəd
wait	waited	wetəd
educate	educated	edʒuketəd
flood	flooded	flʌdəd
wade	waded	wedəd
hoard	hoarded	hordəd

For Animated Phonetics

Check out the following world-class website to view animated graphics showing the production of the sounds of English. Place and manner of articulation are presented for consonants, vowels, and diphthongs.

University of Iowa Phonetics

<http://www.uiowa.edu/~acadtech/phonetics/>

PHONOLOGY: Past Tense Rule

Now state the rule for the formation of the past tense of regular English verbs:

1. Add /t/

2. Add /d/

3. Add /əd/

PHONOLOGY: Past Tense Rule

Now state the rule for the formation of the past tense of regular English verbs:

1. Add /t/ to a present tense verb that ends in a VOICELESS consonant.
2. Add /d/ to a present tense verb that ends in a VOICED consonant.
3. Add /əd/ to a present tense verb that ends in a /t/ or /d/.

Try your new skill by translating the following joke:

ðə tako bɛl tʃəwawa ə dobərmən ænd ə bʊldɒg ar ɪn ə dɒgi
bɑr hæviŋ ə kul wən wən ə gʊd lʊkiŋ fimel kali kəmz əp tu
ðɛm ænd sɛz: huɛvər kæn se livər ænd tʃiz ɪn ə sɛntəns
kæn tek mi hom

so ðə dobərmən sɛz: aj ləv livər ænd tʃiz
ðə kali rəspondz: ðæts nat gʊd ənəf

so ðə bʊldɒg sɛz: aj het livər ænd tʃiz
tu ðɪs ðə kali sɛz: ðæts nat krietiʋ

fajnəli ðə tako bɛl tʃəwawa sɛz: livər əlon ... tʃiz majn

Now try this one ...

nidiŋ tu inkris its revənuz ə manəsteri goz intu ðə
fiʃ ænd tʃips biznəs ænd bikəmz notəd fɔr its
kwizɪn

let wən najt ə trævələr naks an ðə dɔr ænd ə mæn
ɪn ə rɒb spɔrtɪŋ ə fəni hɜrkət opənz ɪt

əpən siɪŋ hɪm ðə trævələr æskz —
ar ju ðə fiʃ frajər

ænd ðə rɒbd mæn hu opənd ðə dɔr rəplajz—
no əɪm ðə tʃɪp mənʃk.

Transcription Interpretation

What do you think might be the native language of the ELL who recorded this passage?

What appear to be his or her major pronunciation difficulties with English?

forɛskor æn twenti dʒirs əgo awər fadərs brʊ
fɔrs əpan dis kantənən ə nu netʃən kənsivəd in
livərti æn dɛdəkət tu də prapəsisən də ɒw mɛn
ar kriet ikwəw.

CONGRATULATIONS !

**You've earned yourself
a trip to the beach . . .**