

## Six Troublesome Verbs

### Lie and Lay

The verb *lie* means “to rest,” “to recline,” or “to be in a certain place.” *Lie* does not take a direct object. The verb *lay* means “to put [something] in a place.” *Lay* generally takes a direct object.

Base Form	Present Participle	Past	Past Participle
lie	[is] lying	lay	[have] lain
lay	[is] laying	laid	[have] laid

#### STYLE

#### TIP

The verb *lie* can also mean “to tell an untruth.” Used in this way, *lie* still does not take an object. The past participle forms of this meaning of *lie* are *lied* and *[have] lied*.

#### EXAMPLE

You should never **lie** on an application.

**EXAMPLES** A napkin **is lying** on each diner’s plate. *[no direct object]*  
The servers **are laying** a napkin on each diner’s plate.  
*[Napkin is the direct object of are laying.]*

The seed **lay** on the ground. *[no direct object]*  
We **laid** seed on the ground for the wild birds. *[Seed is the direct object of laid.]*

The issues **have lain** before the voters. *[no direct object]*  
The state legislators **have laid** the issues before the voters.  
*[Issues is the direct object of have laid.]*

### Exercise 7 Choosing the Forms of Lie and Lay

Choose the correct verb form in parentheses in each of the following sentences.

- EXAMPLE**
- On your desk are (*lying, laying*) several letters that require your signature, Ms. Carmichael.
    - lying*
  - If you are sick, you should be (*lying, laying*) down.
  - They (*lay, laid*) the heavy crate on the handcart.
  - Lucia’s mother has been (*lying, laying*) the canvas out to dry.
  - Amy (*lay, laid*) down for a while.
  - (*Lie, Lay*) down and rest for a minute.
  - She had just (*lain, laid*) down when the doorbell rang.
  - They (*lay, laid*) their plans before the committee.
  - The calf (*lay, laid*) on a pile of straw.
  - Kiyoshi has just (*lain, laid*) his paintbrush down.
  - Please (*lie, lay*) all of those blankets down here.

## Sit and Set

The verb *sit* means “to be in a seated, upright position” or “to be in a place.” *Sit* seldom takes a direct object. The verb *set* means “to put [something] in a place.” *Set* generally takes a direct object.

Base Form	Present Participle	Past	Past Participle
sit	[is] sitting	sat	[have] sat
set	[is] setting	set	[have] set

- EXAMPLES** Who **is sitting** next to the hearth? [no direct object]  
 Who **is setting** the chair next to the hearth? [*Chair is the direct object of is setting.*]  
 Where **should** we **sit**? [no direct object]  
 Where **should** we **set** the groceries? [*Groceries is the direct object of should set.*]  
 We **sat** near the end zone during last night’s game. [no direct object]  
 We **set** the giant papier-mâché football near the end zone during last night’s game. [*Football is the direct object of set.*]

### Exercise 8 Choosing the Forms of Sit and Set

Choose the correct verb form in parentheses in each of the following sentences.

- EXAMPLE** 1. (*Sit, Set*) this box of diskettes on her computer desk, please.  
 1. *Set*
- After he had struck out, Pete (*sat, set*) on the bench.
  - Part of San Francisco’s Chinatown (*sits, sets*) on an incline that overlooks San Francisco Bay.
  - Where were the packages (*sitting, setting*) this morning?
  - We had (*sat, set*) the new cushions on the Adirondack chairs.
  - In Japan people often (*sit, set*) on tatami instead of chairs.
  - They were (*sitting, setting*) placemats on the table.
  - Have you (*sat, set*) here long, Aaron?
  - We have (*sat, set*) down our packs and gotten out our map.
  - Mr. Carr told me to (*sit, set*) the equipment on his desk.
  - I may never know who (*sat, set*) on my glasses.

## STYLE

## TIP

The verb *raise* has definitions other than the one given here. Another common definition is “to grow” or “to bring to maturity.”

## EXAMPLES

They **raise** sorghum.

She **raised** two foster children.

Notice that both of these uses take an object.

## Rise and Raise

The verb *rise* means “to go up” or “to get up.” *Rise* does not take a direct object. The verb *raise* means “to lift up” or “to cause [something] to rise.” *Raise* generally takes a direct object.

Base Form	Present Participle	Past	Past Participle
rise	[is] rising	rose	[have] risen
raise	[is] raising	raised	[have] raised

**EXAMPLES** One by one, the students’ hands **were rising**. [no direct object]  
 One by one, the students were **raising** their hands. [*Hands is the direct object of were raising.*]

Una **rose** and then walked to the front of the classroom. [no direct object]

Una **raised** her eyebrows and then walked to the front of the classroom. [*Eyebrows is the direct object of raised.*]

The number of women who work outside the home **has risen** steadily during the past decade. [no direct object]  
**Has** working outside the home **raised** their economic status? [*Status is the direct object of Has raised.*]

### Exercise 9 Choosing the Forms of Rise and Raise

Choose the correct verb form in parentheses in each of the following sentences.

- EXAMPLE**
- The financial planner predicted, “In the near future, interest rates will not (*rise, raise*); they may decline.”  
    - rise*
  - Air bubbles have been (*rising, raising*) to the surface.
  - Increasing the import duty had (*risen, raised*) retail prices.
  - The speaker (*rose, raised*) from her chair and took the microphone.
  - The star has (*risen, raised*) in the east.
  - The rooster (*rises, raises*) early.
  - Before and during the Revolutionary War, many colonists worked hard to (*rise, raise*) public sentiment against King George III.

7. Hot-air balloons can (*rise, raise*) because they contain heated air, which is less dense than the surrounding air.
8. At the tribal council meeting, someone (*rose, raised*) the issue of land ownership within reservation boundaries.
9. Taylor is (*rising, raising*) the fallen child to her feet.
10. To make traditional challah, braid the bread dough after it has (*risen, raised*) for an hour.

### Review E Choosing the Forms of *Lie* and *Lay*, *Sit* and *Set*, and *Rise* and *Raise*

Choose the correct verb form in parentheses in each of the following sentences.

- EXAMPLE** 1. The snapshots of our trip to Kenya are (*lying, laying*) on top of the photo album.
1. *lying*
  1. All week that box has (*lain, laid*) unopened on the desk.
  2. We had (*rose, raised*) our hats to salute the astronauts.
  3. The fawn (*lay, laid*) motionless in the underbrush.
  4. Our applications were (*lying, laying*) in front of the file.
  5. Would you like to (*sit, set*) with us at the powwow?
  6. Yesterday I (*sat, set*) the telephone book on this table.
  7. Where have you (*laid, lain*) your glasses?
  8. Kathy sang as she (*lay, laid*) the baby in the crib.
  9. Please (*rise, raise*) if you have a question.
  10. Last night's victory really (*rose, raised*) the team's confidence.
  11. Our potbellied pig, Oscar, often (*lies, lays*) in my lap when I watch TV.
  12. Fred should (*lie, lay*) on his side to stop snoring.
  13. After the fire, the museum curator (*sat, set*) on the curb and wept.
  14. Tempers (*rose, raised*) as the debate progressed.
  15. In Washington, D.C., we will (*lie, lay*) flowers at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.
  16. Mrs. Nasser (*sat, set*) the tabbouleh and the kibbe next to other traditional Lebanese foods.
  17. He has (*sit, set*) the pie on the ledge.
  18. Billows of dust had (*risen, raised*) from the field.
  19. Haven't they (*sat, set*) down yet?
  20. You should (*lie, lay*) on a padded surface to do exercises.



Go to the Chapter Menu for an interactive activity.