

Past Tense of Mean: Meant

Mean is an irregular verb. The past simple and the past participle are the same form: meant. The sound also changes, from meen to ment.

Base	mean
Past	meant
Past participle	meant
3rd person / -ing	means / meaning

Examples

What does this word mean? — After does, the verb stays in its base form.

I mean every word I say. — Here mean describes what you truly think.

I meant to call you last night. — Meant to describes a plan that did not happen.

Sorry, I meant Tuesday, not Monday. — Meant is the past of mean, even when you correct yourself.

I have always meant to visit Japan. — Have meant links the past to now.

Mary has meant to learn Spanish for years. — Has meant is present perfect.

Notes

A different vowel sound Mean sounds like meen, but meant has a short vowel and sounds like ment. Do not pronounce meant like mean plus t.

Mean or means? Add s only after he, she or it in the present: This sign means stop. After does or did, use plain mean: What does it mean?

Mean can also describe a person As an adjective, mean describes someone unkind: Don't be mean to your brother. Here it has no past form because it is not a verb.

Common mistakes

What means this word? → What does this word mean? — Questions with mean use does and the base form, not means before the subject.

I meanted to call you. → I meant to call you. — Mean is irregular, so the past is meant, not meanted.

What does this word means? → What does this word mean? — After does, the main verb has no s.

Exercises

Choose the right form

1. I ___ to call you yesterday, but I forgot. (mean / meant / meanted)
2. What does this word ___? (means / meant / mean)
3. She has always ___ to learn to swim. (meant / meanted / mean)
4. On the road, a red light ___ stop. (mean / means / meanted)

Write the missing form

1. He ___ to help, but he was too late.
2. I have never ___ to hurt anyone.
3. What does this sign ___?

Correct the mistake

1. She meanted to say sorry.

Answer key

Choose the right form

1. meant — Yesterday is finished, so use the past form meant.
2. mean — After does, use the base form mean.
3. meant — After has, use the past participle meant.
4. means — With it or a singular noun in the present, add s: means.

Write the missing form

1. meant — The story is finished, so use meant.
2. meant — Have never plus the participle is have never meant.
3. mean — After does, use the base form mean.

Correct the mistake

1. meant — Mean is irregular: the past is meant.

<https://www.fluencyroad.com/irregular-verbs/mean>