The Wug Test – Verbs: How it Works

If you have a **voiceless** sound at the end of a verb and you want to add -*ed* to put it in the past, you pronounce the -*ed* as the **voiceless verb ending (-*t*)**. If you have a **voiced** sound at the end the verb, you get a **voiced verb ending (-*d*)**. The way -*ed* is pronounced always matches the last consonant in the verb in voicing. Regardless of the fact that we spell *walked*, for example, with a -*d*, **k** is voiceless so we say *walked* with a **t**-sound at the end.

What about if a word ends in a vowel? Since all vowels are voiced, all verbs that end in a vowel get a -*d* past tense ending.

What about the -*id* past tense ending? Whenever a verb ends in a -*t* or -*d*, the past tense ending becomes -*id*. It inserts this **i** (or **e** in the spelling) because it would be very difficult to say either two *t*'s or two *d*'s in a row or to say *td* or *dt* next to each other. This is because *t* and *d* are pronounced at the same place in your mouth (right behind your teeth). They are a voiced (*d*) and voiceless (*t*) pair. Adding an **i** in between in these cases makes it possible to say these combinations.

Word Final Sounds and Their Verb Endings		
Voiceless (add -t)	Voiced (add -d)	-t or -d (add -id)
p (hopped)	b (grabbed)	t (rated)
k (stocked)	g (gagged)	d (thudded)
s (bossed)	z (buzzed)	
f (halfed)	v (shoved)	
gh (laughed)	m (tamed)	
ph (graphed)	n (named)	
ch (watched)	ng (banged)	
sh (pushed)	l (crawled)	
	r (feared)	
	dge (judged)	
	a (stayed)	
	e (agreed)	
	i (cried)	
	o (showed)	
	u (imbued)	