

METHODOLOGICAL RECOMMENDATIONS HOW TO TEACH IRREGULAR VERBS USING RHYMING GROUPS

Khrystyna Vovchuk

Teacher,

V.Symonenko Lyceum LMR, Lviv, Ukraine

Learning irregular verbs is of utmost importance since a lot of grammatical notions such as Past Simple, Present, Past Perfect Tenses, Passive Voice etc are connected with them. Thus, effective mastering these categories will guarantee a higher level of accuracy and fluency. However, while learning irregular verbs students (ss) face a number of difficulties. The most common ones are as follows

- ▶ the amount of the irregular verbs;
- ▶ the limited time for learning them (as a rule they are taught while studying Past Simple and not enough time is devoted to them, ss have to learn most of them independently, accordingly);
- ▶ a variety of spelling and pronunciation

Due to the above-mentioned problems this article suggests an approach of teaching and learning Irregular Verbs according to a rhyming principle (Hani, 2012, English Portal, 2024, Zdenda, 2015). There are numerous advantages of it. Some of them are -

- the sense of a systematic approach – since rhymes show the regularities in pronunciation and spelling patterns – simplifies the learning and demonstrates that the English language consists not only of exceptions;
- quicker memorization due to the structural principle (Appendix 1);
- entertainment (rhymes create the atmosphere of relaxation ‘softening’ a learning process and making fun).

Furthermore it would be relevant to suggest some ideas of using rhyming groups at English lessons. The verbs can be split into the appropriate groups by the teachers themselves – depending on the number of verbs needed to be learned – or using teaching resources (Hani Al Tahravi 2012, Zdenda 2015). The rhyming groups can be used at different stages of the lesson, i.e., warm-up, the presentation stage, practice or the end of the lesson. Everything depends on the aim the teacher sets.

First of all, using the rhyming groups of Irregular Verbs as a warm-up activity means that they have been taught before and need to be revised. The attention should be paid either to the pronunciation (e.g., **run** – **ran** – **run**, **swim** – **swam** – **swum**) or spelling (**catch** – **caught** – **caught**, **teach** – **taught** - **taught**) or both. The list can be written on the board or stick on the wall or demonstrated on the screen. Ss look and repeat. They can also be given an extra task such as close their eyes and repeat/write all the verbs from the group they have just seen; to add the verbs to the category

according to the rhyming principle, finding odd one out, learning a poem (Zdenda, 2015), matching etc. However, a task has to be a short one because it is only a warm-up.

Secondly, when a teacher plans using the rhyming group as the main stage of a lesson s/he should take into consideration that it is not only a repetition drill. Activities are to be as different as possible. For example, the presentation stage can be a video (Youtube, Moviemaker, Ppt, Canva) with photos, translation, comments so that it captures ss’ attention. In the Appendix 1 you can see a quizlet developed by me. There is not only an image with pronunciation and a translation on the card but also numerous exercises on practising the material. It looks as a mini-lesson which can be covered anywhere on any device as an individual revision or acquiring new themes. Besides, it is a good idea to record a video with some comments on pronunciation and use of the verbs. A teacher may ask ‘stronger’ ss to make similar videos. Moreover when it comes to practice a teacher may include interactive games (Wordwall, quizzes, ESL games, Live worksheets) of different types (fill-in, matching, rearranging, sentence completion – is especially effective when a couple of tenses are compared) as well as classroom dynamics. For example, an onion ring with rhyming verbs *sell-sold-sold*, *tell –told –told* can be used. Ss need to make up a sentence with each ‘component’ of a rhyming group using a proper tense. A task can be varied in agreement the ss’ level of English, e.g., instead of just making the sentences ss can create a connected story. Another interactive activity is a whispering dictation when a class is divided into some groups, a teacher whispers a sentence to one member of the group and the student has to whisper it correctly back to his team. The task can be complicated by asking to form negations and questions from the dictated sentence. Finally as a production stage ss can complete a poem with rhyming words, complete a rule of irregular verbs’ pronunciation/spelling (*bend*, *sent*, *lend*, *spend* – the last consonant turns into t).

In a nutshell, the use of rhyming groups proved to be more effective than an ordinary learning them in ‘an alphabetic order’. Judging from my experience even ‘weak’ ss managed to remember the irregular verbs better, at least orally or after reminding the common rhyming pattern.

Appendix 1
Rhyming Groups For Each Lesson
Quizlet

Vovchuk, Kh. (2024). Irregular Verbs.

<https://quizlet.com/Christinavov/folders/irregular-verbs/sets>

References

English Portal (2024). Learn Irregular Verbs. Retrieved from: <https://english-portal.com.ua/articles/learn-irregular-verbs-rhyming>

Hani, Al Tahravi (2012). Irregular Verbs: Mnemonic Rhyming Groups. Retrieved from: <https://mrseugeniablog.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/irregular-verbs-mnemonic-rhyming-groups-2012.pdf>

Zdenda, (2015). Irregular Verbs Rhymes. Retrieved from: <https://engames.eu/irregular-verbs-rhymes/>