

Pronouncing –ed endings¹

Spelling of –ed endings

Add –ed or –d if there is a letter “e”

- look > looked
- explain > explained
- live > lived

Pronunciation of –ed endings

Same number of syllables

- look (1 syllable) looked (1 syllable)
- explain (2 syllables) explained (2 syllables)
- live (1 syllable) lived (1 syllable)

Extra syllable

- wait (1 syllable) waited (2 syllables)
- land (1 syllable) landed (2 syllables)

Rule of –ed endings

The rule is that we pronounce the same number of syllables. But if the infinitive of the verb ends with

- t – d

the –ed or –d ending adds an extra syllable

- ɪd

Note

If it's difficult for you to say the –ed ending without adding an extra syllable, you can imagine the –ed is at the start of the next word. For example, say

- I looked everywhere.
- I explained it.

like this

- I look teverywhere.
- I explain dit.

Sometimes you don't hear the –ed ending clearly. This happens when the next word starts with a consonant.

¹ From *English Pronunciation in Use* (Elementary) U43 “I looked everywhere. Pronouncing past tenses”.