

# Troublesome Words

# Sit and Set

**Sit** means "to take a seat or sit down."

I want to sit here a while and rest.  
Sit in the blue chair.

**Set** means "to place something."

Please set this blue chair in that corner.  
Set the red cushion on the blue chair.

Wrong

Billy, why did you **sit** your trap next to the front door where you knew Samie would get into it?

Right

Billy, why did you **set** your trap next to the front door where you knew Samie would get into it?

Wrong

For that, Billy, you must **set** in the corner for an hour and think about poor, sad Samie.

Right

For that, Billy, you must **sit** in the corner for an hour and think about poor, sad Samie.





I **sit** on the chair.



I **set** my gun down.

Write **sit** or **set** to complete the sentence.

Grandpa did not like to \_\_\_\_\_ in this chair.

Grandpa did not like to **sit** in this  
chair.



I **sit** on the chair.



I **set** my gun down.

Write **sit** or **set** to complete the sentence.

Mama carefully \_\_\_\_\_ the lamp on the table.

Mama carefully **set** the lamp on the table.



I **sit** on the chair.



I **set** my gun down.

Write **sit** or **set** to complete the sentence.

Who \_\_\_\_\_ the lantern on this table?

Who **set** the lantern on this table?



I **sit** on the chair.



I **set** my gun down.

Write **sit** or **set** to complete the sentence.

Would you like to \_\_\_\_\_ here by the fire?

Would you like to **sit** here by the  
fire?



Practice – Number your paper from 1 to 10. Write the correct answer for each of the following items.

1. David carelessly (sit, set) the pork chops on the table where the dog could reach them, and it did.

2. Papa (sit, set) his alarm for 5 A.M. so that he would not be late delivering the mail.

3. The sun (sits, sets) in the west.

4. Grandpa was (sitting, setting) by the warm fire.

5. The hunters (sit, set) their raccoon pelts on Grandpa's counter in the general store.

6. Billy (sit, set) the bag of corn by the door.

7. Grandpa was (sitting, setting) in the rocking chair by the window.

8. Billy was going to (sit, set) down by the red oak tree to wait on Rubin and Rainie.



9. The wily old coon would (sit, set) on the trail until Little Ann and Old Dan came running in his direction.

10. Billy knew the ghost coon could not (sit, set) in his hiding place all night long.

# Lie and Lay

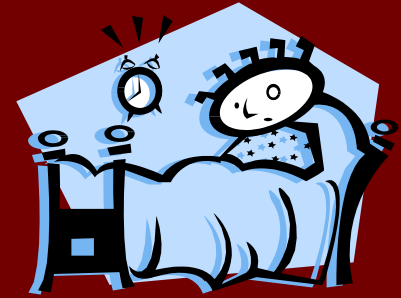


People lie on beds. Dogs lie on people. Fleas lie on dogs. The people, the dogs, and the fleas are very still. Lie is a still verb.

A person picks up a dog and lays it on a blanket. A pair of tweezers picks a flea off a dog and lays it outside. A hen lays an egg. The person, the tweezers, and the hen are very active. Lay is an active verb. It implies that somebody is setting or placing something somewhere.

**Lie** (to lie down on a bed)  
lie, lay, lain, lying

Today I **lie** in bed.



Yesterday I **lay** in bed.

Many times I have **lain** in bed.

Yesterday I was **lying** in bed all day.

**Lying** in bed all day is boring.

Lay (to place something, to set something down)

lay, laid, laid, laying



Today I **lay** the book on the counter.

Yesterday I **laid** the book on the counter.

Many times I have **laid** the book on the counter.

Yesterday I was **laying** the book on the counter when Mom came home.

**Laying** books on the kitchen counter is against the rules in my house.

Americans use the words lie and lay incorrectly so often that your ear has trouble telling you which is correct. Here are a few tips to help you keep these words straight.

# Tip 1

Repeat this like a song.



lie, lay, lain, lie, lay, lain, lie, lay,  
lain, lie, lay, lain,

## Tip 2

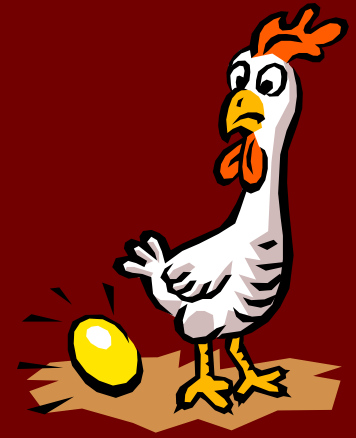


Remember the verb lay works just like **to say** and **to pay**. Those verbs are irregular, but they aren't confusing.

Today I say that I pay; yesterday I said that I paid; many times I have said that I have paid. To lay works the same. Lay, laid, laid



# Tip 3



Nobody says that hens lie eggs.

We all get that one correct: hens lay eggs. Those hens are mighty busy! Just visualize in your mind how active and busy those hens are. Lay is an active, busy word. When you're doing something active (laying down your backpack, laying a new rug on the floor), lay is the word you want.

# Tip 4



Remember that **lie** is a quiet word.

Here's a silly ditty you can use to remind yourself of that (notice all the "eye" sounds): **At night, I turn out my light and lie.** Whether it's on you sofa, on your beach towel, or on your bed, if you are quietly reclining, you're lying – never laying.

# Tip 5

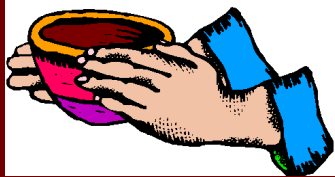


Substitute the word **place** or the word **put**.  
If the sentence sounds right, **lay** is the word you want. If it doesn't sound right, lie is the word you want. Does it sound right to say that you place the book on the table? Yes, so it's correct to say that you lay the book on the table. Does it sound right to say you place in your bed at night? No, so it's correct to say that you lie in your bed at night.

Write lie, lies, lay, or lays to correctly complete the sentence.



I will **lie** down and take a nap.



Mama will **lay** the bowl on the table.

His little sister \_\_\_\_\_ the bowl of milk beside Old Dan.

His little sister **lays** the bowl of  
milk beside Old Dan.

Write lie, lies, lay, or lays to correctly complete the sentence.



I will **lie** down and take a nap.



Mama will **lay** the bowl on the table.

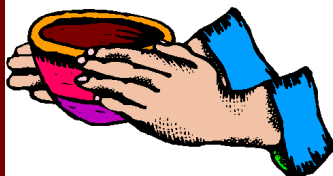
Mama asked if she might \_\_\_\_\_ on the bed.

Mama asked if she might **lie** on the bed.

Write lie, lies, lay, or lays to correctly complete the sentence.



I will **lie** down and take a nap.



Mama will **lay** the bowl on the table.

Will you \_\_\_\_\_ down your trap  
for a few minutes?

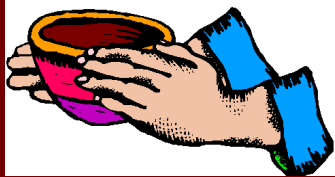


Will you **lay** down your trap for a few minutes?

Write lie, lies, lay, or lays to correctly complete the sentence.



I will **lie** down and take a nap.



Mama will **lay** the bowl on the table.

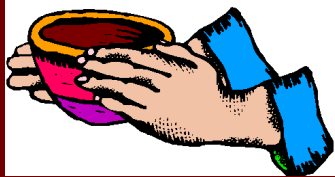
Old Dan likes to \_\_\_\_\_ in the sun.

Old Dan likes to **lie** in the sun.

Write lie, lies, lay, or lays to correctly complete the sentence.



I will **lie** down and take a nap.



Mama will **lay** the bowl on the table.

Why don't you \_\_\_\_\_ down for a few minutes?

Why don't you **lie** down for a few minutes?

Practice – Number your paper from 1 to 32. Write the correct answer for each of the following items.

1. I will (lay, lie) a blanket out for Billy to use when he washes his hair.

2. You'll feel much better if you just (lay, lie) down and rest for a while.

3. Billy will (lay, lie) the trap down next to the river.



4. Mama's hens aren't (laying, lying) any eggs this week.

5. The cat is (laying, lying) on the rug, next to the chair.

6. Grandma (lays, lies) her hairbrush on the dresser when she finishes using it.

7. The four raccoons like to (lay,  
lie) in the sun.

8. Everyday when Papa came home he would (lay, lie) his jacket on the sofa.

9. You've been (laying, lying) there  
entirely too long. Get up!

10. The dogs have been (laying, lying) on the porch waiting for Billy.

11. He yelled at his dog, "(Lay, Lie) down!"



12. The police officer told him to  
(lay, lie) down his gun.

13. The cat will (lay, lie) its toy on the doorsill.

14. He will (lay, lie) his hand over his heart when he makes a vow.

15. Billy should (lay, lie) on the bed if he is tired.

# Review Lie (to lie down on a bed)

lie, lay, lain, lying

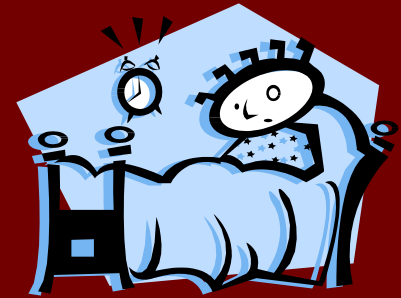
Today I **lie** in bed.

Yesterday I **lay** in bed.

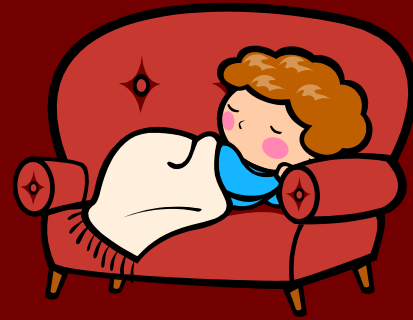
Many times I have **lain** in bed.

Yesterday I was **lying** in bed all day.

**Lying** in bed all day is boring.



Additional Practice - Write **lie, lay, lain, lying** to correctly complete each of the sentences.



16. Billy \_\_\_\_\_ on the banks of the Illinois River.

# Lie, Lay, Lain, Lying

17. \_\_\_\_\_ down. You need  
to take a rest.

# lie, lay, lain, lying

18. I like to \_\_\_\_\_ on the floor and watch the news.



# lie, lay, lain, lying

19. Yesterday Billy \_\_\_\_\_ on the sofa and read his magazine about coon dogs.

# lie, lay, lain, lying

20. Why does that cat do nothing  
but \_\_\_\_\_ around all day?

# lie, lay, lain, lying

21. That cat has \_\_\_\_\_ in the sun all day.

# lie, lay, lain, lying

22. What a lazy cat! She has  
\_\_\_\_\_ here all day.

# lie, lay, lain, lying

23. The children were so exhausted after the playing on the slide they just \_\_\_\_\_ on the benches.

# lie, lay, lain, lying

24. Last night Billy \_\_\_\_\_ awake  
in bed, thinking about coon dogs.

# lie, lay, lain, lying

25. Do you plan to \_\_\_\_\_ on  
the grass all day?

**Review** Lay (to place something, to set something down)  
lay, laid, laid, laying



Today I **lay** the book on the counter.

Yesterday I **laid** the book on the counter.

Many times I have **laid** the book on the counter.

Yesterday I was **laying** the book on the counter when Mom came home.

**Laying** books on the kitchen counter is against the rules in my house.



Write **lay, laid, laid, laying** to correctly complete each of the sentences.



26. My chickens \_\_\_\_\_ 20  
eggs yesterday.

**lay, laid, laid, laying**

27. The police officer told him to  
\_\_\_\_\_ down his gun.

**lay, laid, laid, laying**

28. Someone's books are  
\_\_\_\_\_ on the doorsill.

**lay(s) , laid, laid, laying**

29. The treasure \_\_\_\_\_ hidden  
beneath the waves.

**lay, laid, laid, laying**

30. The gifts were \_\_\_\_\_ by the fireplace.

# lay, laid, laid, laying

31. Billy had \_\_\_\_\_ the squash  
on the table.

## lay(s), laid, laid, laying

32. Billy \_\_\_\_\_ a blanket on the grass.

# Leave or Let

- **Leave** means “to go away, depart, or set out” or “to allow to remain.”

What time should we **leave** for the fiddle contest?

If you **leave** Old Dan behind, he will just follow us.

- **Let** means “to permit or consent.”

I will **let** you wear my new hat.



Wrong

**Let** him alone!

Right

**Leave** him alone!

(Allow him to remain alone.)

Wrong

**Leave** me do it again.

Right

**Let** me do it again.

(Permit me to do it.)

The most common mistake is  
whether to say:

Let it be. or

Leave it be.

Just remember the old Beatles  
song to help you remember this.

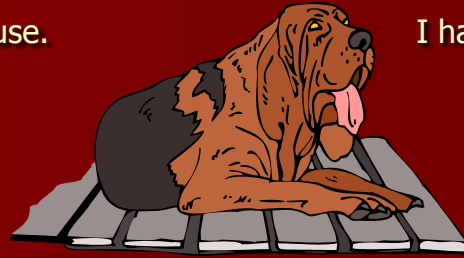


I **let** Little Ann sleep in the house.

I had to **leave** Old Dan outside.



I **permitted** Little Ann sleep in the house.



I had **to allow** Old Dan **to remain** outside.

OR

Old Dan had to **leave** the porch.

Old Dan had **to depart** the porch.

Write **let** or **leave** to complete the sentence.

\_\_\_\_\_ it sitting on the stove.

**Leave** it sitting on the stove.

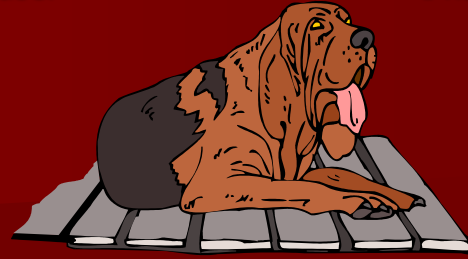
Allow it to remain on the stove.

I **let** Little Ann sleep in the house.



I **permitted** Little Ann sleep in the house.

I had to **leave** Old Dan outside.



I had **to allow** Old Dan **to remain** outside.

OR

Old Dan had to **leave** the porch.

Old Dan had **to depart** the porch..

Write **lets** or **leaves** to complete the sentence.

My mom \_\_\_\_\_ me stay up until 9:00.

My mom **lets** me stay up until  
9:00.

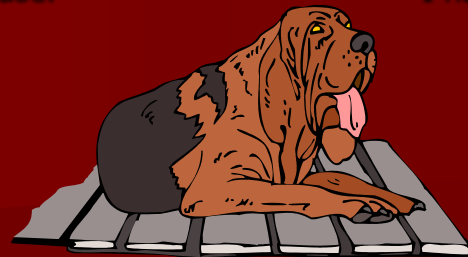
My mom **permits** me stay up until  
9:00.

I **let** Little Ann sleep in the house.



I **permitted** Little Ann sleep in the house.

I had to **leave** Old Dan outside.



I had **to allow** Old Dan **to remain** outside.

OR

Old Dan had to **leave** the porch.

Old Dan had **to depart** the porch.

Write **lets** or **leaves** to complete the sentence.

Billy \_\_\_\_\_ his books on the table.



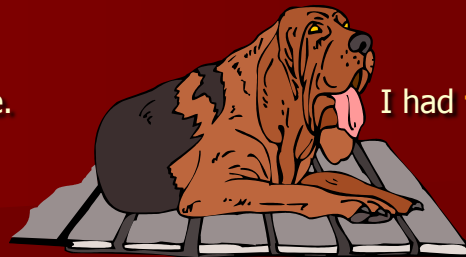
Billy **leaves** his books on the table.

Billy allows his books to remain on  
the table.



I **let** Little Ann sleep in the house.

I **allowed** Little Ann sleep in the house.



I had to leave Old Dan outside.

I had **to allow** Old Dan **to remain** outside.

Write **let** or **leave** to complete the sentence.

We \_\_\_\_\_ the room together.

We **leave** the room together.

We depart the room together.

Practice – Number your paper from 1 to 10. Write the correct answer for each of the following items.

1. (Let, Leave) me help you with that.

2. Dad will (let, leave) the pie on the counter for Billy.

3. I will (let, leave) you alone until you feel better.

4. Grandpa will (let, leave) Billy be by himself for a while.

5. (Let, Leave) your little brother  
alone.



6. (Let, Leave) him be.

7. Although Billy was the master, he often (let, leave) Old Dan and Little Ann have their way.

8. Grandpa often said, “(Let, Leave) me tell you what Old Dan and Little Ann did today.”

9. By the end of the day, Billy will  
(let, leave) you with an answer to  
that question.

10. Someday you must (let, leave)  
me tell you the story of Old Dan  
and Little Ann.

# Teach and Learn

- **Teach** means “to instruct, train, or pass on knowledge.”

Ms. Fletcher **teaches** her class how to read.

- To **learn** something is “to receive or be given knowledge.”

The students **learn** to read with the help of the teacher.

Think of it this way.



Many people can **teach** you something they know how to do. However, you are the one who **learns** how to do something new.

Wrong

I will **learn** you how to solve this math problem.

Right

I will **teach** you how to solve this math problem. I am sure you can learn it.



Wrong

I will **teach** how to dance after a series of lessons.

Right

I will **learn** how to dance after a series of lessons.



Billy will **teach** the hounds how to hunt.

Billy will train the dogs.



The hounds will **learn** how to hunt.

The hounds will  
gain knowledge.

Write **teach** or **learn** to complete  
the sentence.

Little Ann will \_\_\_\_\_ Old Dan  
how to swim across the river.

Little Ann will **teach** Old Dan how  
to swim across the river.



Billy will **teach** the hounds how to hunt.

Billy will train the dogs.



The hounds will **learn** how to hunt.

The hounds will  
gain knowledge.

Write **teach** or **learn** to complete  
the sentence.

Billy used a raccoon hide to \_\_\_\_\_  
Little Ann and Old Dan.

Billy used a raccoon hide to **teach**  
Little Ann and Old Dan.



Billy will **teach** the hounds how to hunt.

Billy will train the dogs.



The hounds will **learn** how to hunt.

The hounds will  
gain knowledge.

Write **teach** or **learn** to complete  
the sentence.

Samie could not \_\_\_\_\_ to stay  
away from the trap.

Samie could not **learn** to stay  
away from the trap.



Billy will **teach** the hounds how to hunt.

Billy will train the dogs.



The hounds will **learn** how to hunt.

The hounds will  
gain knowledge.

Write **taught** or **learned** to  
complete the sentence.

Little Ann and Old Dan \_\_\_\_\_  
quickly how to track coons.



Little Ann and Old Dan **learned**  
quickly how to track coons.

Practice – Number your paper from 1 to 10. Write the correct answer for each of the following items.

1. Why did Billy (teach, learn) the girls to take care of Samie?

2. Do you want to (teach, learn)  
how to trap coons?

3. Dad tried to (teach, learn) Billy how to set the trap.

4. In this book you will (teach, learn) all about coon hunting.

5. How will Billy (teach, learn) the way to town?

6. Who will (teach, learn) the girls how to skip a stone across the creek?

7. Billy (taught, learned) his sisters  
how to build a dog pen.



8. I (taught, learned) how to make a fishing pole using a safety pin and string.

9. Grandpa can (teach, learn) me how to grind corn to make cornmeal.

10. Can you (teach, learn) Billy how to skin a coon?

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