

Lie vs. Lay



Lie means “to repose.” It is intransitive and never takes an object.

I *lie* down to sleep.

A different *lie* that is spelled and pronounced the same means “to fabricate or mislead” someone through speech.

He *lied* to me. He told a *lie*.

Lay means “to put.” It is transitive and always takes an object.

I *lay* my baby down to sleep. I *lay* the book on the table.

The following chart shows how these three confusing words are conjugated:

	<u>Present Tense</u>	<u>Past Tense</u>	<u>Past Participle</u>	<u>Present Participle</u>
(telling an untruth)	lie	lied	have lied	is lying
transitive verb	lay	laid	have laid	is laying
intransitive verb	lie	lay	have lain	is lying

Practice. In the following sentences, write in the correct form of these three verbs. It will be one of the verbs shown in the above chart.

Example: Would you please lay the book on the desk and help me?

1. Don't _____ to me; I promise not to be mad if you only will tell the truth.
2. Why don't you _____ down and take a nap before we go?
3. After _____ down the concrete, the workers began to dig another trench.
4. The mother told her son to _____ still.
5. She has _____ in bed for four months now.
6. As I _____ me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep.
7. Someone _____ the treasures there hundreds of years ago.
8. They _____ out \$4,000 for their daughter's wedding reception.
9. Mary _____ her fork on her plate and left the dining room.
10. Please do not _____ on that sofa.
11. It seems that fewer people are _____ in the sun these days.
12. A small piece of shrapnel _____ right next to my foot.
13. When he completes his work, Martin will _____ his tools on the counter.
14. They have _____ their weapons on the ground and raised their hands in surrender.