



# “To Lie” or “To Lay”

## Uses of the Verb “To Lie”

The verb “**to lie**” means to rest or recline. With the verb **lie**, the subject usually takes a position or is in a position. **Lie** never has an object (a word following the verb which answers the question “what” or “whom”).

Present: lie		Past: lay		Past Participle: lain	
I lie	we lie	I lay	we lay	I have lain	we have lain
you lie	you lie	you lay	you lay	you have lain	you have lain
he lies	they lie	he lay	they lay	he has lain	they have lain

**Hint:** if you **cannot** use place or put instead of the verb “**to lie**”, you know some form of the verb “**to lie**” is correct.

For instance, in the sentence, *I like to **lie** in bed on Sunday morning*, you cannot say, *I like to **put** in bed on Sunday morning*.

### Example

### Sentence

### Analysis

1. I lie by the swimming pool on sunny Sunday afternoons. Lie – present tense – means rest or recline by the pool – does not have an object.
2. Our dog lies under the shade tree on hot, July afternoons. Lies – present tense – means rest or recline under the tree – does not have an object.
3. He lay awake for two hours. Lay – past tense – means rest or recline – does not have an object.
4. We lay in the sun too long. Lay – past tense – means rest or recline – does not have an object.
5. He has lain in bed for two weeks. Has lain – past participle – means rest or recline – does not have an object.

**Memory trick:** Both lain, the past participle of to lie, and recline, the meaning of to lie contain the letter “N”.

## Uses of the Verb “To Lay”

The verb “to lay” is often misused for the verb “to lie”. The verb “to lay” means to place or put something down. It always takes an object (a word following the verb which answers the question “what” or “whom”).

Present: lay		Past: laid		Past Participle: laid	
I lay	we lay	I laid	we laid	I have laid	we have laid
you lay	you lay	you laid	you laid	you have laid	you have laid
he lays	they lay	he laid	they laid	he has laid	they have laid

**Hint:** if you **can** use place or put instead of the verb “**to lay**”, you know some form of the verb “**to lay**” is correct.

For instance, in the sentence, *John has **laid** his hammer on the ground*, you can say, *John has **put** his hammer on the ground*.

Example	Sentence	Analysis
1.	We <u>lay</u> the pipe in the ditch.	<u>Lay</u> – present tense – means to place or put something down – has an object, <i>pipe</i> .
2.	He <u>lays</u> his reports on the same desk every morning.	<u>Lays</u> – present tense - means to place or put something down – has an object, <i>reports</i> .
3.	You <u>laid</u> the keys on the table.	<u>Laid</u> – past tense - means to place or put something down – has an object, <i>keys</i> .
4.	Lila <u>laid</u> the newspaper on the white sofa.	<u>Laid</u> - past tense - means to place or put something down – has an object, <i>newspaper</i> .
5.	They <u>have laid</u> the new carpet.	<u>Have laid</u> – past participle - means to place or put something down – has an object, <i>carpet</i> .