

## Grammar and Style Tips: “Lie,” “Lay”

“Lie” is an intransitive verb (it doesn’t take an object) and it means “recline” or “rest.” If you can substitute “recline” for the verb in question, use “lie.” You can remember this because “lie” is contained within “recline.”

Infinitive: to lie

Past tense: lay (Exhausted, I lay on the grass and fell asleep.) *\*This is what causes so much confusion!*

Past perfect: lain (No sooner had he lain down than the phone rang.)

Participle: lying (I love lying in bed on weekend mornings.)

“Lay,” on the other hand, is a transitive verb, meaning it must have an object, and it means “place or put.”

Infinitive: to lay

Past tense: laid (She laid her keys on the table and forgot about them.)

Past perfect: laid (The teacher claimed he had never laid a hand on the child.)

Participle: laying (Laying the quilt in his aunt’s lap, he asked her if she was thirsty.)

### Practice Review: *Lie/Lay*

Responsibility for setting the budget \_\_\_\_\_ with the legislature.

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The governor will \_\_\_\_\_ that responsibility on the legislature.

He who \_\_\_\_\_ down with dogs gets up with fleas.

When you finish the application, please \_\_\_\_\_ it on the receptionist’s desk.

Feeling sick, she went inside to \_\_\_\_\_ down.

My grandfather used to \_\_\_\_\_ on the floor for his nap every day.

First he would \_\_\_\_\_ his pipe and tobacco beside him.

Yesterday Molly just \_\_\_\_\_ on the couch.