“LAY” AND “LIE”
(forms of the verb)

“Lay” is an action verb performed on something or someone else; it must have a direct object.

“Lie” means to recline; it can never have a direct object follow it.

Simple/
Base Present Past Past Participle Future Present Participle
Lay: Lay Laid was laid will Lay is laying
Lie: Lie Lay have lain will Lie is lying

Examples using “Lay”

Simple form “I lay the book on the table.”
“s” form “He lays down his load whenever he can.”
Past tense “You laid the baby on the bed.”
Future tense “She will lay the blame on him.”
Present participle “Joe is laying it on the line.”
Past participle “The boss has laid down the law.”

If you can substitute the word “Put,” you can use “Lay.”

Examples using “Lie”

Simple form “I lie down each night”
“s” form “The dog falls asleep every time it lies down”
Past tense “He was tired, so he lay on the bed”
Future tense “The cat will lie by the fire”
Present participle “Sue is lying down right now”
Past participle “You had lain down after the movie”

NOTE: The simple or base form is used by itself in the present tense or in the future tense when combined with either “will” or “shall.” The “s” form of the verb is used only in the present tense with third person, singular subjects.