

Word Usage



hanged or hung?

Hanged is used only when referring to the hanging of a person by the neck with the intention of killing him or her.

In all other cases, **hung** is the past tense of **hang**.



The murderer is going to be **hanged** at dawn.



The murderer is going to be **hung** at dawn.



We **hung** your picture on the wall.



We **hanged** your picture on the wall.

What about “Hung, drawn, and quartered”, then? Shouldn’t it be “Hanged, drawn and quartered”?

No, and this is why: “Hanged” is used when a person is hung by the neck with the intention of causing death. Being hung, drawn, and quartered is a rather different, very grisly, way to die: the person is not intended to die from the hanging but instead—slowly, painfully, and with a great deal of mess—by being slit open so that his guts spill out, and then chopped up into quarters.