Allomorphs
English 384, Linguistics 1
A morpheme is a unit of sound.

Just as an allophone is a variation of a single phoneme, an allomorph is a variety of a single morpheme.
So what does it mean?

- An allomorph is an alternate pronunciation of a phonological form of a morpheme in a particular linguistic environment.
Here’s an example...

The English plural morpheme has 3 allomorphs:

- /Schwa əz/ or /əz/... as in busses
- /z/... as in twigs
- /s/... as in cats
Here’s a helpful hint...

The allomorph is conditioned by the phonetic or sound environment of the word...
## Plural English Allomorphs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ðz (Schwa z)</th>
<th>[s]</th>
<th>[z]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bushes</td>
<td>Cats</td>
<td>Pens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges</td>
<td>Tips</td>
<td>Dogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buses</td>
<td>Books</td>
<td>Cars</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. [ðz] occurs on nouns ending in s, z, š, z, č, j. (sibilants)
2. [s] occurs following all other voiceless sounds
3. [z] occurs following all other voiced sounds
So remember...

The allomorphs of English plural are:

[əz]  [s]  [z]
Now on to Allomorphs for English Past Tense...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wish/ wished</th>
<th>Grab/ grabbed</th>
<th>Want/ wanted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk/talked</td>
<td>Love/ Loved</td>
<td>wait/ waited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiss/kissed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADD [t] if following voiceless sound</td>
<td>ADD [d]</td>
<td>ADD [əd] if following an alveolar stop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The past tense inflectional morphemes that mark the past tense are:

- [t] as in talk/talked
- [d] as in grabbed
- [əd] as in want/wanted