

Verbs

A verb is a word that expresses an action, a condition, or a state of being.

One of the properties of a verb is **person**. (Remember - subjects and verbs must agree in person!) Person tells who is:

- speaking (first person)
- being spoken to (second person)
- being spoken about (third person)

For example:

I walk.	(1st person, singular)
You walk.	(2nd person, singular)
He or she walks.	(3rd person, singular)
We walk.	(1st person, plural)
They walk.	(3rd person, plural)

Another property of verbs is **number**, as in singular or plural. (Remember that subjects and verbs must also agree in number!)

Most of the time, an "s" on the end of a noun indicates that the noun is plural - and usually, a noun without an "s" on the end of it is singular. The **opposite** is true of verbs. An "s" ending on a verb usually indicates that it is singular - and a verb without an "s" ending is usually plural.

Some common rules to remember are:

With...	Use a...
I	singular verb (no "s")
You	plural verb (no "s")
He, She, It	singular verb ("s")
We	plural verb (no "s")
You	plural verb (no "s")
They	plural verb (no "s")

Another property of a verb is **voice**, as in [active or passive](#). The active voice occurs when the subject of the sentence performs the action. The passive voice occurs when the subject of the sentence receives the action. Passive voice verbs use a "helping" verb. For example:

- The girl **played** the violin. (active voice)
- The violin **was played** by the girl. (passive voice)

*When you are writing, do not overuse the passive voice. It will make your writing less powerful. Active verbs are more direct and concise.

Another property of verbs is **tense**. Tense indicates when the time of the action or the state of being takes place. There are 3 basic **verb tenses** (past, present, and future), each having a simple, perfect, progressive, and perfect progressive form. Today, we will focus on the following tenses:

<p>Simple Present Tense - expresses the action or state of being that is happening now or that happens regularly.</p>	<p>She plays the violin.</p>
<p>Present Progressive Tense - shows an ongoing action that is occurring now. This tense is formed by using a helping verb (am, is, are) with the verb form ending in -ing.</p>	<p>She is playing the violin.</p>
<p>Present Perfect Tense - describes an action that was completed at an unspecified time in the past or began in the past and continues into the present. This tense is formed by using a helping verb (has, have) with the past participle of the verb.</p>	<p>She has played the violin many times. (<i>unspecified time</i>) She has played the violin since she was 4 years old. (<i>continues into the present</i>)</p>
<p>Simple Past Tense - expresses an action or state of being that began and ended in the past. Regular past tense verbs are formed by adding -ed. Past tense forms of irregular verbs have to be memorized.</p>	<p>She played the violin.</p>
<p>Past Progressive Tense - shows a past action that was happening when another action occurred. This tense is formed by using a helping verb (was, were) with the verb form ending in -ing.</p>	<p>She was playing the violin when the string broke.</p>
<p>Past Perfect Tense - shows an action in the past that took place before another action in the past. This tense is formed by using a helping verb (had) with the past participle of the verb.</p>	<p>Before her 7th birthday, she had played the violin as a solo act in Chrysler Hall.</p>
<p>Simple Future Tense - expresses an action or state of being that will occur in the future. This tense is formed by using will or shall with the verb.</p>	<p>She will play the violin at the next concert.</p>
<p>Future Progressive Tense - shows an ongoing action that will take place in the future. This tense is formed by using will be or shall be with the verb form ending in -ing.</p>	<p>She will be playing the violin every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday after school in the practice room.</p>
<p>Future Perfect Tense - shows an action or state of being in the future that will be completed before another action or state of being in the future. Form this tense by using will have or shall have before the past participle form of the verb.</p>	<p>By her birthday next January, she will have played the violin at our Fall Arts Festival a dozen times.</p>

Consistent Verb Tense

When you are writing, you should always be careful to maintain [consistent verb tense](#).

Writing should not shift from one tense to another if the time of the action is the same. For example:

- **Incorrect:** She **pulled** her bow across her violin with too much force and **breaks** a string.
- **Correct:** She **pulled** her bow across her violin with too much force and **broke** a string.

Pulled is past tense and **breaks** is present tense, but it should be past tense (**broke**) to maintain consistency with the time frame.

- **Incorrect:** Yesterday she **had pulled** her bow across her violin with too much force and **broke** a string.
- **Correct:** Yesterday she **pulled** her bow across her violin with too much force and **broke** a string.

Had pulled is past perfect tense, but it should be past tense (**pulled**) to maintain consistency with the time frame (yesterday); **broke** is past tense referring to an action in the past - before the current time.

Writing should only shift from one tense to another to show a change in time. For example:

- Before she **took** her first violin lesson, she **had taught** herself to play Pachelbel's Canon in D major.

Took is past tense referring to an action completed before the current time frame. **Had taught** is past perfect and refers to an action that took place before another past event (the first violin lesson).

- She **is practicing** her violin solo so that she **will be ready** for the concert tonight.

Is practicing is present progressive, referring to an ongoing action in the current time (she is currently practicing and is continuing to do so - she has not yet finished practicing). **Will be ready** is simple future, referring to an action which will take place after the current time (the concert will start in the future - tonight).

As you can see, it is appropriate to shift tenses when there is a change in the time frame:

- After she **plays (present)** the violin, the audience **will applaud (future)** wildly!

However, if the time frame of the action remains the same, you should **not** shift tenses. For example:

INCORRECT (mixed past and present)	CORRECT (present or past)
He exits the house just a few dozen steps behind her and quickly caught with her.	He exits the house just a few dozen steps behind her and quickly catches up with her.
	He exited the house just a few dozen steps behind her and quickly caught up with her.

The wizard takes pity on them and removed the spell.	The wizard takes pity on them and removes the spell.
	The wizard took pity on them and removed the spell.
First, there was a huge rainstorm. Then, Jupiter summons the winds.	First, there is a huge rainstorm. Then, Mother Nature summons the winds.
	First, there was a huge rainstorm. Then, Mother Nature summoned the winds.
The crowd goes wild. They loved the performance!	The crowd goes wild. They love the performance!
	The crowd went wild. They loved the performance!
He wraps his arm around her, and closed his eyes.	He wraps his arm around her, and closes his eyes.
	He wrapped his arm around her, and closed his eyes.
As I wandered through the forest, I am even more frightened.	As I wander through the forest, I am even more frightened.
	As I wandered through the forest, I was even more frightened.
I walked with my two new friends, and notice that everyone is smiling at us.	I walk with my two new friends, and notice that everyone is smiling at us.
	I walked with my two new friends, and noticed that everyone was smiling at us.