



VERB TENSE

What Is Verb Tense?

Verb tense shows when an action happens. In English, the most common verb tenses are past, present, and future.

Using the correct verb tense helps your reader understand when events take place.

Why Is Verb Tense Important?

Correct verb tense makes your writing clear and consistent. Changes in tense can confuse your reader if they are not used carefully.

Common Verb Tenses

Present Tense

The present tense describes actions that happen regularly or are true now.

Example: Students study for exams.

Past Tense

The past tense describes actions that already happened.

Example: Students studied for their exams yesterday.

Future Tense

The future tense describes actions that will happen.

Example: Students will study for their exams tomorrow.

Consistency in Verb Tense

In most academic writing, you should stay in the same verb tense unless there is a clear reason to change.

Examples:

Incorrect: Students studied for exams, and they understand the material better.

Correct: Students studied for exams, and they understood the material better.

When Is It Okay to Change Tense?

Sometimes, it is necessary to change tense.

Example: Students studied for the test yesterday, and now they feel more confident.

The change in tense makes sense because it shows a shift from the past to the present.

Verb Tense in Academic Writing

In academic writing, present and past tense are used most often.

Present Tense

Used for general truths and current ideas.

Example: Education plays an important role in personal development.

Past Tense

Used for describing completed actions or past research.

Example: The study found that students performed better after tutoring.

Common Verb Tense Errors

Even when students understand verb tense, they may still make some common mistakes.

Switching Tense Without Reason

Incorrect: Students write their essays, and they revised them later.

Correct: Students wrote their essays, and they revised them later.

Incorrect Verb Form

Incorrect: She go to class every day.

Correct: She goes to class every day.

Mixing Time Frames

Incorrect: Yesterday, students study for the test.

Correct: Yesterday, students studied for the test.

Tips for Using Verb Tense Correctly

When revising your writing, keep these tips in mind:

- Choose a tense and stay consistent
- Match the verb to the time of the action
- Check your verbs when editing your writing
- Read your sentences out loud to hear if tense changes sound natural

Final Takeaway

Verb tense helps your reader understand time. When your tenses are clear and consistent, your writing becomes easier to follow and more effective.