



Graduate Online Writing Studio

Verb Tenses

Verbs communicate the actions of sentences. To use verbs effectively in your writing, try to be mindful of issues like tense and subject and verb agreement.

Tenses:

1. Use the past tense to discuss outside research.

Example: "Alin Richardson (2017) **found** not all Yuccan birds migrate South in January."

2. Use present tense when discussing conclusions, limitations, and future directions.

Example: "My research shows that students **perform** better when given test strategies."

Keep your verb tenses consistent. If you use past tense, try to continue the past tense in the same paragraph or next paragraphs to help the reader follow along.

Subject and Verb Agreement:

1. Use singular verbs along with singular subjects.

Example: "The **average** of test results **decreases** as we add more subjects."

2. Use plural verbs along with plural subjects.

Example: "The **marks** in experiment 1, including the double-blind testing rounds, **increase** in overall accuracy."

Your subject and verb must both be either singular or plural. If you are confused about whether your subject is singular or plural, try to disregard phrases like "together with," "including," or "as well as."