

Section 5.4, continued  
Revising for Word Choice

- Use a strong, precise verb if possible rather than a verb plus an adverb.

Example 7: They went fast down the path.

A precise verb like *ran*, *sped*, *hurried*, or *zoomed* would be a better choice than *went fast*.

Example 8: She walked angrily away from the heckler.

A more precise verb like *stomped* or *strode* would be a better choice.

Practice 1

**Substitute a stronger and more precise adjective, adverb, or phrase for each underlined word below.**

- |       |                                |
|-------|--------------------------------|
| _____ | 1. a <u>good</u> day           |
| _____ | 2. a <u>bad</u> pizza          |
| _____ | 3. a <u>great</u> movie        |
| _____ | 4. an <u>interesting</u> novel |
| _____ | 5. a <u>nice</u> meal          |
| _____ | 6. played poker <u>badly</u>   |
| _____ | 7. a <u>great</u> trick        |
| _____ | 8. a <u>good</u> puppy         |
| _____ | 9. a <u>bad</u> time           |
| _____ | 10. a <u>nice</u> car          |

Practice 2

**Substitute a precise verb to replace the verb plus adverb that are underlined.**

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| _____ | 1. The chilled boy <u>went slowly</u> through the snow.     |
| _____ | 2. The frustrated actress <u>cried softly</u> .             |
| _____ | 3. The bell <u>rang loudly</u> .                            |
| _____ | 4. The patient <u>walked painfully</u> to the bed.          |
| _____ | 5. The veterinarian <u>spoke softly</u> to the injured dog. |

Section 6.4, continued  
Punctuating Complex Sentences

Practice 1

**The following complex sentences have an adjective or an adverb clause. Underline the subordinate clause and add necessary commas. Circle any commas that you add. Not all sentences will need commas.**

1. When you hear the buzzer the brownies will be ready.
2. Kate planted gourds because she wanted them for her craft.
3. Her gown which was blue silk fit well.
4. If Boone wins the game he'll be in first place.
5. The dog who made the mess ran away.
6. Shannon who asked the question made a strong point.
7. If you sand it first you won't have that problem.
8. They had a summer house that was in the mountains.
9. Walt was lonely since his family was gone.
10. The season finale though it was revealing did not solve the mystery.

Practice 2

**Combine the following sentences into complex sentences. Add or omit any words necessary. There are different possibilities for most, so there is no *one* right way. Be sure to punctuate them correctly.**

1. She was excited. She had won the prize.

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2. The cat got out. I was frustrated.

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3. You keep score. I will keep the time.

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4. He lost his hat. His face got sunburned.

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5. Anthony is her son. He teaches tennis.

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6. Stephen King wrote *Thinner*. It was Jack's favorite.

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7. The chest was too heavy. She could not lift it.

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8. You sang the song. I heard it.

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9. It may snow. We will sled.

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10. He painted the model car. It was a Corvette.

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# Using Verbs Correctly

## Section 8.1 Proofreading for Correct Tense and Irregular Verb Usage



*When we were growing up, my older brother Tom loved to aggravate my sisters and me. He was not cruel, but he had tease us mercilessly, both in words and in actions. When he succeeded in getting my younger sister to cry, he would enrage her further by saying, "Cry me a cupful, Linda." He did not even seem to mind the wrath of his older sister occasionally. He did not need to bother her often because he have Linda and me to torment. I was an easy target because I idolized him and never fighted back or even telled on him.*

*One day as I was washing dishes at the kitchen sink, I heard him walk behind me. I knowed he would do something. When he had flipped me on the hip with a spoon, I was not surprised. I pivoted and hit his face with my hand. It was such a hard slap that he falled to the floor. I was as surprised as he was. Mother and a neighbor were sitting in the kitchen and add insult by howling with laughter at his unexpected consequences. I runned to my room to escape further actions, but he did not even follow me. That was probably the only time he gotten more than he expected.*

This is Sue's writing with twelve verb use errors. Can you find them?

Common mistakes that students make when writing are using the wrong verb tense and using incorrect forms of irregular verbs. First, let's review verb tenses.

### Verb Tenses

Verb tense expresses time. The three simple tenses are **past**, **present**, and **future**.

#### Simple Tenses

<b>Past:</b>	<i>Elaine <b>talked</b> to me yesterday.</i>
<b>Present:</b>	<i>Elaine <b>talks</b> to me. (now)</i> <i>Elaine <b>talks</b> fast. (constant)</i> <i>Elaine <b>talks</b> every day on the cell phone. (habitual)</i> <i>The earth <b>is</b> round. (general truth)</i>
<b>Future:</b>	<i>Elaine <b>will talk</b> to our group tomorrow.</i>

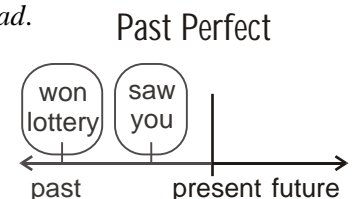
There are also three other times we need to express, which are called the perfect tenses. The perfect tenses are **past perfect**, **present perfect**, and **future perfect**. You don't have to remember the names, but you do need to understand how to use each of these tenses correctly in your writing.

#### Perfect Tenses

**Past perfect:** Sometimes two events happen in the past, and we need to show which happened before the other. To show this tense, we use the helping verb *had*.

Example 1: *When I saw you yesterday, I **had won** the lottery.*

*Saw* is past tense, but winning the lottery came before seeing you, so we show the first action by using *had*.



Section 8.2, continued  
Proofreading for Shifts in Tense

Example 2: As Chuck arrives home, Nelly puts dinner into the oven.

As Chuck arrived home, Nelly put dinner into the oven.

As Chuck arrived home, Nelly puts dinner into the oven.

correct

correct

incorrect



### Verb Shifts in Future Tense

Future tense is often used in conjunction with the present tense, but it is rarely mixed with the past tense.



Example 3: Before I go to school, I will take a shower. correct

The verb *go* is present tense and *will take* is future, but the entire sentence shows a future action. In this example, it would be incorrect to use a past tense verb with the future tense.

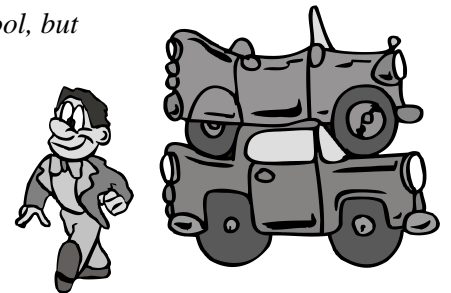
Before I went to school, I will take a shower. incorrect

### Correctly Mixing Tenses

Sometimes, mixing the simple verb tenses in a sentence is okay. If a sentence clearly refers to a time in the present and a time in the past, the tense will change. On some occasions, you can have a past tense with a future tense, but notice that the time frames are clearly given.

Example 4: Five years ago, the teachers parked in the back of the school, but now, they have a new parking lot at the front of the school.

In this sentence, you can easily see that *parked* refers to an action that occurred five years ago, but *have* refers to *now* in the present. In this case, it is okay to change tenses.



Example 5: Last night, I slept little, but tonight I will go to bed early.

This sentence clearly refers to a time in the past, *last night*, and a time in the future, *tonight*.

### Verb Shifts in Perfect Tenses

In general, you can use present perfect verbs with present or future tense verbs in the same sentence. Likewise, you can use past perfect verbs with past tense verbs. There are exceptions to these rules, but you will probably not use the exceptions in your writing. The most important thing to remember when using the perfect tense verbs with simple tense verbs is to make sure your sentence is logical.

Section 10.1, continued  
Proofreading for Dangling Participles,  
Misplaced Modifiers, and Parallelism  
and Punctuating Participles

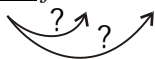
### Misplaced Modifiers

A **modifier** is a word or a group of words that gives more specific information about another word or group of words. Examples of modifiers are adjectives, adverbs, prepositional phrases, and participle phrases. We reviewed misplaced (or “dangling”) participles in Section 10.1, so now let’s look at other types of modifiers. Sometimes these other types of modifiers can be misplaced. They are not lost, but the reader cannot tell what the modifier is modifying.

If a modifier’s placement doesn’t make it clear what it modifies, the sentence may be misunderstood. To correct misplaced modifiers, move the modifying word or phrase so that it appears directly **before** or **after** the object it modifies.



Example 10: *She **almost** finished all her homework.* Unclear



In this example, the placement of *almost* makes this sentence confusing. This sentence could be misread as meaning she thought about finishing her homework but didn’t.

*She finished **almost** all her homework.* Clear



Moving *almost* next to *all* makes the sentence clear that she finished most of her homework but not all of it.

Example 11: *He washed the dog **in his pajamas**.* Unclear



The dog wasn’t in his pajamas, but since the phrase comes after *dog*, the sentence appears to mean that.

***In his pajamas**, he washed his dog.* Clear



*In his pajamas* is a prepositional phrase that should modify *he*, not *dog*, so moving it closer to *he* makes the meaning clearer.

Look at the following sentences to see how the position of **just** affects the meaning of the sentence.

Example 12: ***Just** the children watched the cartoon.*



*Meaning:* No one else besides the children watched the cartoon.

*The children **just** watched the cartoon.*



*Meaning:* The children did nothing else but watch the cartoon.

*The children watched **just** the cartoon.*



*Meaning:* The children didn’t watch anything but the cartoon.