Verb tense, form & aspect

Keep verb tense consistent within a sentence or passage unless the time frame. . .



Lesson `rw.conventions.W5`

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The idea

Keep verb tense consistent within a sentence or passage unless the time frame genuinely changes; do not shift tense without a reason. Use the perfect aspects to show sequence: the past perfect (had + past participle) marks an action completed BEFORE another past action, and the present perfect (has/have + past participle) marks an action reaching into or relevant to the present.

Is the time frame consistent? Is there a sequence of past actions, an irregular participle, or a time marker that fixes the tense?

Hold tense steady unless time shifts. For an earlier past action, use the past perfect. Use the proper past participle after has/have/had. Read time markers to set the tense.

Watch every step

She has ___ to that museum many times.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- **A.** gone
- **B.** went ✗ *irregular-participle error*
- **C.** going ✗ *irregular-participle error*
- **D.** goed ✗ *irregular-participle error*

Why **A** — "gone." Choose the verb form matching consistency, sequence, participle, and any time marker.

Now a harder one

By next June, the team ___ the project.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- **A.** will have completed
- **B.** completed ✗ *tense-from-time-marker error*
- **C.** completes ✗ *tense-from-time-marker error*
- **D.** had completed ✗ *tense-from-time-marker error*

Why **A** — "will have completed." Choose the verb form matching consistency, sequence, participle, and any time marker.

The method, in one line

Verb tense, form & aspect

Hold tense steady unless time shifts. For an earlier past action, use the past perfect. Use the proper past participle after has/have/had. Read time markers to set the tense.

Did I avoid an unwarranted tense shift? Is the earlier past action in the past perfect? Is the participle correct for the irregular verb? Does the tense fit the time marker?

Watch out: two traps to dodge

⚠ unwarranted tense shift

Shifts verb tense within a sentence or passage with no change in time frame to justify it.

⚠ perfect-aspect error

Uses the simple past where the past perfect is needed to show one action preceding another, or misuses the present perfect.

Name the trap before you pick — most wrong answers are one of these two.

Try it, then watch the walk-through

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