



## WRITING CENTER

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### Verb Tense Consistency

Verb tense refers to when an action took place. It tells the reader whether something happened in the past, is happening in the present, or will happen in future. If the writer is describing actions that take place in the same time frame, they should ensure that their verb tenses remain consistent.

1. (ex.) She **told** me that I'm smart and she **gives** me an A on my assignment.

Here, "told" is written in past tense, and "gives" is written in present tense.

**(ex. corrected to past tense)** She told me that I'm smart and she gave me an A on my assignment.

2. (ex.) I **see** a bird outside my window and I **told** my roommate to come look.

"See" implies present tense, while "told" refers to the past.

**(ex. corrected to present tense)** I see a bird outside my window and I tell my roommate to come look.

3. (ex.) They **will be going** to the party later and they **bring** chips and salsa.

"Will be going" is written in future tense, and "bring" is written in present tense.

**(ex. corrected to future tense)** They will be going to the party later and they'll bring chips and salsa.

4. (ex.) He **said**, "Can I have some more waffles?" I **give** him some more and **he'll** thank me.

In this example, multiple tenses are being used to describe the same situation. "Said" implies that this took place in the past. "Give" is written in present tense, and "he'll" is future tense.

**(ex. corrected to past tense)** He said, "Can I have some more waffles?" I gave him some more and he thanked me.

Still unsure about how to keep your verb tenses consistent?

Make an appointment with the Writing Center!

Library, Room 311/312

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