

Grammar You Must Know, Lesson #6: Tenses

Adapted from thecollegepanda.com

The basic idea: There are three basic verb tenses (past, present, and future) with four variations on each (simple, progressive, perfect, and perfect progressive). Here's a visual:

The 12 Tenses

	Simple	Progressive	Perfect	Perfect Progressive
Present	I eat	I am eating	I have eaten	I have been eating
Past	I ate	I was eating	I had eaten	I had been eating
Future	I will eat	I will be eating	I will have eaten	I will have been eating

You don't really need to memorize the different verb tenses. You just need to be able to keep verbs in the same tense. When you have verbs in different tenses in the same sentence, you create an unsettling tense shift. It throws your reader off. Don't do it.

Examples of tense shifts (we'll fix them together):

After I **get** home from school, I **take** off my coat, **sit** down, and **watched** TV.

While my brother **was eating**, I **slept**.

Directions: Please fix the tense errors below to keep all verbs in each sentence in the same tense. Bonus: Pick the verb tense that keeps each sentence as concise as possible.

1. Although the cheetah holds the record for fastest land animal, many other mammals outlasted it.
2. Whenever we stopped by the market, my mom always tries to negotiate the prices.
3. Every Sunday, Jane cleans the house and does the laundry at the same time her dad could have mowed the lawn.