

Recognizing and Correcting Inappropriate Shifts in Verb Tense

Name: _____

Date: _____

Score: _____ / 10



Quick Review

Inside ONE sentence or ONE paragraph, keep the verb tense consistent. A shift is okay only when the time really changes (a flashback, a future prediction). Watch for half-shifts: when only one verb in a list slips into a different tense. To fix, decide on ONE time frame and rewrite every verb to match.

PRACTICE

Choose the answer that uses verb tense consistently.

- Which sentence has an INAPPROPRIATE shift in verb tense?
 - Carla opened the door and stepped onto the porch.
 - Carla opens the door and steps onto the porch.
 - Carla will open the door and will step onto the porch.
 - Carla opened the door and steps onto the porch.
- Which version is CORRECTLY edited (no inappropriate shifts)?
 - The dancer twirled across the stage and leaps gracefully into the air.
 - The dancer twirled across the stage and leaped gracefully into the air.
 - The dancer twirls across the stage and leaped gracefully into the air.
 - The dancer will twirl across the stage and leaped gracefully into the air.
- Read the paragraph: 'Felix opened his notebook and started to write. He thinks carefully about each word.' Which fix removes the inappropriate shift?
 - Change 'thinks' to 'thought'.
 - Change 'opened' to 'opens'.
 - Change 'started' to 'starts'.
 - Change 'thinks' to 'will think'.
- Which sentence has NO inappropriate shift?
 - After the bell rang, students hurry into the cafeteria and grabbed trays.
 - After the bell rang, students hurried into the cafeteria and grab trays.
 - After the bell rang, students hurried into the cafeteria and grabbed trays.
 - After the bell will ring, students hurried into the cafeteria and grab trays.



5. Which sentence has an inappropriate shift?
- A. Whenever I visit my aunt, she bakes apple pie and pours us cold milk.
 - B. Whenever I visited my aunt, she baked apple pie and poured us cold milk.
 - C. Whenever I will visit my aunt, she will bake apple pie and will pour us cold milk.
 - D. Whenever I visit my aunt, she baked apple pie and pours us cold milk.
6. Which paragraph is CORRECTLY revised?
- A. Last weekend, we hiked Bear Mountain. The trail was steep, and our boots get muddy. We see a deer near the summit.
 - B. Last weekend, we hiked Bear Mountain. The trail was steep, and our boots got muddy. We saw a deer near the summit.
 - C. Last weekend, we hike Bear Mountain. The trail is steep, and our boots got muddy. We saw a deer near the summit.
 - D. Last weekend, we hiked Bear Mountain. The trail is steep, and our boots get muddy. We see a deer near the summit.
7. Which sentence is CORRECTLY edited to remove the shift?
- A. When the show began, the lights dimmed and the crowd cheered.
 - B. When the show begins, the lights dimmed and the crowd cheered.
 - C. When the show began, the lights dim and the crowd cheered.
 - D. When the show began, the lights dimmed and the crowd cheers.
8. Which fix removes the shift in this sentence? 'Mom packed our lunch and reminds us to bring water bottles.'
- A. Change 'packed' to 'packs'.
 - B. Change 'reminds' to 'remind'.
 - C. Change 'reminds' to 'reminded'.
 - D. Change 'packed' to 'will pack'.
9. Which sentence has NO inappropriate shift?
- A. If you mix the colors carefully, you got a beautiful purple.
 - B. If you mixed the colors carefully, you get a beautiful purple.
 - C. If you will mix the colors carefully, you got a beautiful purple.
 - D. If you mix the colors carefully, you get a beautiful purple.
10. Rewrite the paragraph so all verbs are in the SAME tense (your choice — past or present): 'Jordan grabs his backpack and ran to the bus stop. He waves at his neighbor and climbed aboard.'



Answer Keys

- 1 A B C D
- 2 A B C D
- 3 A B C D
- 4 A B C D
- 5 A B C D

- 6 A B C D
- 7 A B C D
- 8 A B C D
- 9 A B C D
- 10

Explanations

1. D	D mixes past 'opened' with present 'steps' — a half-shift. A keeps both verbs in past, B keeps both in present, and C keeps both in future. Each of A, B, and C uses ONE time frame consistently.
2. B	B keeps both verbs in simple past ('twirled' and 'leaped'). A mixes past + present, C mixes present + past, and D mixes future + past. Only B is consistent.
3. A	Two of the three verbs are past ('opened', 'started'), so fix the single mismatched verb: 'thinks' → 'thought'. B and C would mean changing TWO verbs instead of ONE, and they pick the wrong time frame. D shifts to future, which doesn't match the past narration.
4. C	C uses simple past for ALL three verbs ('rang', 'hurried', 'grabbed'). A and B each leave one verb in present. D shifts the first verb to future and keeps the third in present — two errors.
5. D	D jumps present 'visit' → past 'baked' → present 'pours' — two shifts in one sentence. A is all present, B is all past, and C is all future. Only D contains inappropriate shifts.
6. B	'Last weekend' fixes the time as past, so all four verbs must be past: 'hiked, was, got, saw'. B does this. A keeps 'get' and 'see' in present. C and D mix tenses across sentences.
7. A	A keeps all three verbs in simple past ('began', 'dimmed', 'cheered'). B leaves 'begins' in present; C leaves 'dim' in present; D leaves 'cheers' in present. Only A is fully consistent.
8. C	Match the LATER verb to the earlier one. 'Packed' is past, so change 'reminds' → 'reminded'. A would shift to present (you'd then need to change 'reminds' too — extra work). B makes a subject-verb agreement error ('Mom remind'). D introduces a future tense not in the original.
9. D	A general 'if' rule pairs simple present with simple present — D is consistent. A pairs present with past, B pairs past with present, and C uses 'will' inside the if-clause AND mixes with past 'got'.
10.	Answer: Past version: 'Jordan grabbed his backpack and ran to the bus stop. He waved at his neighbor and climbed aboard.' Present version: 'Jordan grabs his backpack and runs to the bus stop. He waves at his neighbor and climbs aboard.' Accept either an all-past version OR an all-present version. Mark wrong if any verb is left in the other tense (a half-shift), or if the student introduces a future tense ('will grab') not in the original.

