

Boost Free Lessons - Year 9 English

Lesson 4: Verb Tense Consistency

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Worked Example 1

Correct the tense error in the passage below.

She opened the door and walks into the hall.

1. Identify the tense of each verb. *Opened* is past tense.
2. *Walks* is present tense, so the sentence shifts halfway through.
3. Unless there is a reason to change, keep one tense across a passage.
4. Choose the tense that most of the passage already uses, and make the rest match.

She opened the door and walked into the hall.

Worked Example 2

When is it correct to change tense?

I am standing in the kitchen now, but last week I was standing in the same place for a very different reason.

1. A shift is correct when the **time** genuinely changes.
2. *Am standing* is present, describing now. *Was standing* is past, describing last week.
3. The words *now* and *last week* signal the change to the reader.
4. A shift is an error only when the time has not changed.

The shift is correct, because the sentence moves from the present to a clearly signalled past.

Remember: Keep one tense unless the **time genuinely changes**. Check by underlining every verb in a paragraph and confirming they all sit in the same time.



Question 1: Correct the tense error in each sentence, or write *correct*.

1. He picked up the bag and runs for the door.

2. They arrive early and waited by the gate.

3. The dog barks and then ran into the yard.

4. I finished the essay and hand it in.

5. She will call when she arrives.

6. We were tired, so we stop for a break.

7. The lights flicker and then went out.

8. Yesterday I walk to school in the rain.



Question 2: Read the passage below, then answer the questions.

The bus pulled in twenty minutes late. I notice that the driver was different, and the seat I usually took is already occupied. I sat near the back and watched the rain start again.

1. Find the first tense error in the passage.

2. Find a second tense error.

3. What tense is the passage mostly written in?

4. Rewrite the passage consistently in the past tense.

5. Why does an unintended tense shift confuse a reader?



Question 3: Answer the following questions.

1. Write three sentences in consistent past tense about a journey.

2. Rewrite them in the present tense.

3. Explain when a tense change is correct rather than an error.





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Answers and Model Responses: Verb Tense Consistency**Question 1**

1. runs → ran
2. arrive → arrived
3. barks → barked
4. hand → handed
5. Correct as written
6. stop → stopped
7. flicker → flickered
8. walk → walked

Question 2

1. *notice* should be *noticed*.
2. *is* should be *was*.
3. Past tense.
4. The bus pulled in twenty minutes late. I noticed that the driver was different, and the seat I usually took was already occupied. I sat near the back and watched the rain start again.
5. The reader loses track of when events are happening, so the sequence becomes unclear.

Question 3

1. Model response: We left before dawn. The road was empty for the first hour, and nobody spoke. By the time the sun came up we had already crossed the border.
2. Model response: We leave before dawn. The road is empty for the first hour, and nobody speaks. By the time the sun comes up we have already crossed the border.
3. A change is correct when the time of the events genuinely changes, and the writing signals it with words such as *now*, *yesterday* or *last week*.

