

# GRAMMAR: VERBS

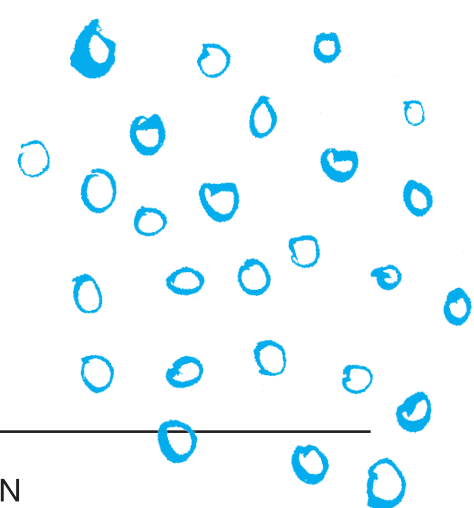
Some of the most frequent grammatical mistakes have to do with verbs. People tend to switch verb tenses while writing as well as have issues with subject-verb agreement. This handout will help you understand verbs and how to fix your errors.

## VERB TENSES/VERB FORM

There are twelve commonly used verb forms in the English language. While some verb endings are irregular, most follow the rules below.

The first step to consider while writing is whether something happened in the past, present, or future. No matter what verb form you use, it is important to stay consistent throughout your paper.

Aspect/Time	Past	Present	Future
Simple	<p>Past simple (Usually) verb-<b>ed</b></p> <p>He <b>sketch</b>ed.</p>	<p>Present simple verb-<b>s/es</b></p> <p>He <b>sketch</b>es.</p>	<p>Future simple <b>will</b> + verb</p> <p>He <b>will</b> sketch.</p>
Continuous	<p>Past continuous <b>was/were</b> + verb-<b>ing</b></p> <p>She <b>was</b> sketching. They <b>were</b> sketching.</p>	<p>Present continuous <b>am/is/are</b> + verb-<b>ing</b></p> <p>I <b>am</b> sketching. She <b>is</b> sketching. We <b>are</b> sketching.</p>	<p>Future continuous <b>will be</b> + verb-<b>ing</b></p> <p>She <b>will be</b> sketching.</p>
Perfect	<p>Past perfect <b>had</b> + verb-<b>ed</b></p> <p>He <b>had</b> sketch<b>ed</b>.</p>	<p>Present perfect <b>has/have</b> + verb-<b>ed</b></p> <p>He <b>has</b> sketch<b>ed</b>. They <b>have</b> sketch<b>ed</b>.</p>	<p>Future perfect <b>will have</b> + verb-<b>ed</b></p> <p>We <b>will have</b> sketch<b>ed</b>.</p>
Perfect continuous (not used as frequently)	<p>Past perfect continuous <b>had + been</b> + verb-<b>ing</b></p> <p>She <b>had been</b> sketching.</p>	<p>Present perfect continuous <b>have/has + been</b> + verb-<b>ing</b></p> <p>I <b>have been</b> sketching. She <b>has been</b> sketching.</p>	<p>Future perfect continuous <b>will have + been</b> + verb-<b>ing</b></p> <p>They <b>will have been</b> sketching.</p>



## SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

Subject-verb agreement is when the subject (person, place, or thing the sentence is about) matches the correct verb tense. Most mistakes with subject-verb agreement happen when a singular subject is mixed with a plural verb, or vice versa. It helps to identify the subject of the sentence and determine whether it is singular or plural, and then match the verb form to the subject.

- When two or more nouns are expressed in a sentence, they must be connected to a plural verb.  
Calvin and I **are** collaborating on the project.  
My mom and I **were** attending the exhibit.
- If the sentence only uses a single noun as the subject, then a singular verb is used.  
Calvin **is** talking to the curator.
- When connecting two or more singular nouns in a sentence, use a singular verb.  
Either the **laptop** or the **tablet is** on the desk.
- When combining singular and plural nouns, make sure the verb agrees with the part of the subject that is closest to the verb in the sentence.  
The **shop** or **gallery opens** at ten o'clock.  
The **shop** or **galleries open** at ten o'clock.
- Collective nouns are words that imply more than one, but they are treated like a singular noun. Collective nouns could be groups of people or animals, such as a herd, flock, team, committee, or class.  
The **committee is** explaining the guidelines for the MFA thesis proposal.  
Whether you agree with it or not, the **class has** critiqued your work.
- When a phrase comes in between the subject and the verb, don't get confused. The verb should always agree with the subject of the sentence, not the other nouns or pronouns.  
One of the paints **is** open.  
The **woman** with all the supplies **walks** past me.