

Verb tenses

	Past	Present	Future
Simple	walked	walk, walks	will walk
Progressive	was, were walking	am, is, are walking	will be walking
Perfect	had walked	has, have walked	will have walked

- ✓ **Simple present:** now, general truths, habits, and **writing about literature and art**
- ✓ **Present perfect:** began in the past and continues, or matters now — cued by *since, for, over, during*
- ✓ **Past perfect:** the **earlier** of two past events — *had planned* a picnic, but it rained. Cued by *already, by the time, before, after, when*
- ✓ **Future perfect:** done by a future point — *By forty, I will have taught for twelve years*
- ✓ **Past progressive:** ongoing when something interrupted — *was biking when it began to rain*
- ✓ **Unreal past:** *If + had + participle, then would, could or might have* — *If she had studied, she might have passed*
- ✓ A perfect tense takes the **participle**: *had drawn, never had drew*
- ✓ Keep tenses consistent, and read the clues: *yesterday* needs the past

Modal verbs

- ✓ *can, could, may, might, must, shall, should, will, would, ought to*
- ✓ Possibility, necessity, permission, ability or obligation — never conjugated, and followed by the base verb: *should be*
- ✓ *won't* = will not; *shan't* = shall not

Comparing

- ✓ **Two things:** comparative + *than* — *-er* for short adjectives (*taller*), *more* for three syllables or more (*more manicured*)
 - ✓ **Three or more:** superlative — *-est* (*fastest*), or *most, least* (*most intimidating*)
 - ✓ Never both: *more better, most fastest*
 - ✓ *The + comparative, twice*, links cause and effect: *The less she studied, the worse she did*
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| good, better, best | bad, worse, worst |
| much, many: more, most | little: less, least |
| far, farther, farthest — distance | far, further, furthest — figurative |

Quantity and number

- ✓ *fewer, many* for things you count; *less, much* for amounts you don't: *fewer assignments, less time*
- ✓ *this, these* near; *that, those* far — matching the noun in number
- ✓ *Unique* means one of a kind: nothing is *very unique*
- ✓ *Each* and *every* are singular; any number but one is plural

Adverbs

- ✓ Modify verbs, adjectives and other adverbs: **when, where, how much, how, how often**
- ✓ Many are an adjective + *-ly*: *careful* → *carefully*
- ✓ Degree words change the meaning: Mark *scarcely* understood vs. *almost* understood
- ✓ **Conjunctive adverbs** (*however, therefore, moreover, nonetheless*) work as transitions: a comma after, and a semicolon or period before when one joins two sentences

❖ Misplaced and dangling modifiers

- ✓ **Misplaced:** too far from what it describes. Put it beside its target
Not "Diana went to the party with Bill, wearing a new cocktail dress" but "Wearing a new cocktail dress, Diana went to the party with Bill."
- ✓ **Dangling:** the doer is missing from the sentence. Name it right after the modifier
Not "Hurrying to put everything back, the room was cleaned" but "Hurrying to put everything back, the children cleaned the room."