

USING CONSISTENT VERB TENSE

Using consistent tense within paragraph is very important. Otherwise, the reader may have the sense that they are time traveling back and forth from idea to idea.

EX: (NOT CONSISTENT)

I am scared, but the first day of college was excellent. My first professor, Dr. Cotter, is wonderful. She was this tiny lady with a kind disposition. My colleagues are smart and are likewise very friendly. The first day, they were asking me about where I lived and what I liked to do for fun. Overall, the first day is fantastic.

VERSUS

EX: (CONSISTENT)

I was scared, but the first day of college was excellent. My first professor, Dr. Cotter, was wonderful. She was a tiny lady with a kind disposition. My colleagues were smart and likewise very friendly. The first day, they were asking me about where I lived and what I liked to do for fun. Overall, the first day was fantastic.

If you located the verbs in the first example, then you should have decided that not all of these verbs were in a consistent tense. Sentences in the paragraph switched from past to present to past to present and so forth.

I am scared, but the first day of college was excellent. My first professor, Dr. Cotter, is wonderful. She was this tiny lady with a kind disposition. My colleagues are smart and are likewise very friendly. The first day, they were asking me about where I lived and what I liked to do for fun. Overall, the first day is fantastic.

STRATEGY

The best thing to do is to decide which tense you wish to express yourself in, locate the verbs, and change the verbs to match the desired tense.

Remember: You can change tense in the next paragraph. However, it is customary and useful to keep the same tense in a single paragraph.