VERB TENSES

Verbs need to agree on all levels of your paper: sentence, paragraph, and the essay in its entirety. It is important to pick which tense you’ll use before you start writing, then keep the tense consistent throughout. However, exceptions can occur. For example, verb tense might change when writing how the past will influence the future.

**Present Tense:**
Something is happening. The verb is in its infinitive, unconjugated form; this is often referred to as simple.

- I study, you study, he/she studies
- I am studying, you are studying, he/she is studying
- I have studied, you have studied, he/she has studied (it happened in the past, but since it may still be happening it is technically present tense)
  - These verbs can often be confusing because they use the past-participle (verb+’ed’) form of a verb which is used in every tense.

Present tense auxiliaries: is, am, are, has, had, have

**Past Tense:**
Something has happened, and it is now over.

- I studied, you studied, he/she studied
- I was studying, you were studying, he/she was studying
- I had studied, you had studied, he/she had studied

Past tense auxiliaries: would, could, might, should, did, was/were, had/have

**Future Tense:**
Something will happen (same as present + will/shall auxiliary).

- I will study, you will study, he/she shall study
- I will have studied, he/she will have studied

Future conditional/hypothetical tense occurs when something will happen dependent of something else.

- I would do my homework, but I have a broken leg.

Future tense auxiliaries: will, can, may, shall, do/does, must