Using verb tenses correctly in your writing

• Use the present or past tenses consistently, both within one sentence and from one sentence to the next.
  
  o Example: After deliberating for a whole day, the jury acquitted the defendant. That made the prosecuting attorney furious and he vowed to appeal the verdict.

• If the situation you are writing about requires a change of tense, use a time expression to alert your reader.
  
  o Example: Whenever the economy is in bad shape, incumbent presidents have a hard time winning an election. In 1992, President George Bush lost the election because voters were nervous about the weak economy.

• When writing about events or ideas presented by another writer in stories or articles, use the present tense.
  
  o Example: In an article published in a sociology journal two weeks ago, the author discusses several factors that contribute to the alarming rise in teenage pregnancy.

Excerpted from: Verb Tenses: Exercise 1