Verb Tenses:

**Present**: Action that is occurring now, occurs habitually, or is generally true

**Simple Present**: Plain form or -s form
- I walk.
- You / we / they walk.
- He / she / it walks.

**Present Progressive**: Am, is, or are plus -ing form
- I am walking.
- You / we / they are walking.
- He / she / it is walking.

**Past**: Action that occurred before now

**Simple Past**: Past-tense form (-d or -ed)
- I / he / she / it walked.
- You / we / they walked.

**Past Progressive**: Was or were plus -ing form
- I / he / she / it was walking.

**Future**: Action that will occur in the future

**Simple Future**: Plain form plus will
- I / you / he / she / it / we / they will walk.

**Future Progressive**: Will be plus -ing form
- I / you / he / she / it / we / they will be walking.

**Present Perfect**: Action that began in the past and is linked to the present

**Present Perfect**: Have or has plus past participle (-d or -ed)
- I / you / we / they have walked.
- He / she / it has walked.

**Present Perfect Progressive**: Have been or has been plus -ing form
- I / you / we / they have been walking.
- He / she / it has been walking.

**Past Perfect**: Action that was completed before another past action

**Past Perfect**: Had plus past participle (-d or -ed)
- I / you / he / she / it / we / they / had walked.

**Past Perfect Progressive**: Had been plus -ing form
- I / you / he / she / it / we / they will have been walking.

**Future Perfect**: Action that will be completed before another future action

**Future Perfect**: Will have plus past participle (-d or -ed)
- I / you / he / she / it / we / they will have walked.

**Future Perfect Progressive**: Will have been plus -ing form
- I / you / he / she / it / we / they / will have been walking.

Information obtained from *The Little, Brown Compact Handbook, Custom Second Edition for Trident Technical College*
Common errors with verb forms
One common error occurs with –s endings.
Use the –s form of a verb when the noun is third-person singular and the action occurs in the present.

The singer asks [not ask] for a glass of water.

Another common error occurs with –ed endings.

- Sometimes this happens with certain words whose –ed endings are not always pronounced in casual speech. However, the –ed ending must be included in written form. Some of these words include “supposed,” “used,” “asked,” “discussed,” “mixed,” and “walked.”

  I used to work at the local grocery store.
  Janice was lost, so she asked the stranger for directions.

- Sometimes an -ed error happens with the past participle form of a verb. When the verb is used with a helping verb such as be or have, you need the past participle (the -d or –ed) form of the verb.

  He is concerned [not concern] about his grades.
  I have watched [not watch] many sunsets.

Another error occurs with improper infinitive forms.

An infinitive is the plain form of the verb with the word to in front of it: to run, to know, to be.

Infinitives can function in many ways in a sentence, but by themselves they are not the main verb and should not have additional endings on them such as –s, -ed, or –ing.

  I wanted to watch [not to watched] my favorite show, but the power went out.

A final error occurs with the irregular verbs “to be” and “to have.”

Be sure to use the proper form of the verb for the tense you need:

To Be: Present Tense: I am you are he, she, it is we are you are they are
Past Tense: I was you were he, she, it was we were you were they were

To Have: Present Tense: I have you have he, she, it has we have you have they have
Past Tense: I had you had he, she, it had we had you had they had

Many verbs express action. (feel, shout, walk, grow, have, consider, study) Ask, “Who or what is doing what in the sentence?” The “doing what” is the verb.

Other verbs show a state of being. (am, is, are, was, were) Remember these words; they are always verbs.

Sometimes verbs occur in phrases. (Examples: has jumped; should have known; is running; will try)

Subjects can have more than one verb. (She enjoys downtown shopping but hates traffic.)