

Verb tense trouble spots: Tense shifting in narrative

Another place students have trouble with verb tenses is in reporting events that have taken place in the past. Remember that if your first verb is in the past tense, all other verbs must **shift** accordingly.

Exceptions: universal truths (*He taught us that the earth revolves around the sun*) and some immediate reporting (*The administration just announced that all the freshmen will be housed in one dorm next year.*)

Correct the tense shifting errors in each sentence, as necessary:

- 1) After talking to several people in my dorm, I realized that everyone else feels the same as I do, and that there is nothing to be afraid of.
- 2) When I walked into the room and saw all the other international students, I wondered why I have been so worried about making friends here.
- 3) It was a warm, sunny afternoon. We took my father's car. I was nervous, because this was the first time I drove it.
- 4) Coming to MIT in the fall of 1999 was difficult for me, as I was never away from my country before.
- 5) At the age of 15, I made the decision that I will become a physicist. I have always wanted to work for NASA.
- 6) I would never have cheated on the test if I knew what the consequences will be later.
- 7) When I went home on break, my former girlfriend acted like she never saw me before. I couldn't believe it. How could she act like that?
- 8) I felt very sad saying good-bye to my high school friends, because I felt like I will never see them again.
- 9) After failing my first chemistry quiz, I realized how difficult MIT will be.

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