

VERB TENSE CONSISTENCY

A. Fill in the correct form of the verb given in parentheses below:

Last night, as I (eat)_____ my dinner, I (think)_____ of a person who (be)_____ my friend years ago. Thinking about it now, I (not know)_____ why I (remember)_____ her last night. Perhaps it (be)_____ because we (do)_____ so many things together, although I (not see)_____ her in several years. Last night I suddenly (want)_____ to (see)_____ her. But I probably (not do)_____ anything about it. I probably (think)_____: "I (enjoy)_____ her friendship when I (see)_____ her every day, and now that I (not see)_____ her, I (enjoy)_____ the memory of our friendship, which (be)_____ all that (remain)_____ of our close relationship.

B. Check the following sentences for confusing shifts in tense. In most cases with an inappropriate shift, there is more than one way to correct the inconsistency. Reading the sentences aloud will help you recognize the difference in time:

1. If the club limited its membership, it will have to raise its dues.
2. As Barbara puts in her contact lenses, the telephone rang.
3. Thousands of people will see the art exhibit by the time it closes.
4. By the time negotiations began, many pessimists have expressed doubt about them.
5. I was terribly disappointed with my grade because I studied very hard.
6. The moderator asks for questions as soon as the speaker has finished.
7. Harry wants to show his friends the photos he took last summer.
8. Scientists predict that the sun will die in the distant future.
9. The boy insisted that he has paid for the candy bars.
10. The doctor suggested bed rest for the patient, who suffers from a bad cold.

C. Each of the following sentences contains an error in consistency of verb tense. Revise each sentence to make the verb tenses consistent. Give only one answer for each sentence

1. Pioneers travelled west in Conestoga wagons and have endured many hardships.
2. After the president of the United States threw out the first ball, the baseball game begins.
3. The hungry child will eat some crackers and drank a cup of milk.
4. Eduardo worked in the garden while we trim the hedges.
5. By dinner I will have finished my homework, and Laurie finishes her chores.
6. After I swallowed the huge gulp of water, I will cough.
7. As the trees sway in the breeze, the birds will have sung merrily.
8. Hannah had mixed her paints before she notices a crack in her palette.
9. My parents owned a diner until last year when they sell it.
10. Tim had washed the dishes but forgets to put them away.

D. The following paragraph fails to maintain a consistency of tenses. Correct the verbs that are incorrect:

The school cafeteria is usually crowded, but the other day things were worse than usual. A visiting band plays for the morning assembly and our band master invited the young men for lunch. Forty more people isn't much more when you are in a large auditorium but when you bring them to an already crowded cafeteria something had to give. It did! The moveable partition separating the faculty dining room from the student section came out laughing. For one day at least we had plenty of room and the faculty had the rare pleasure of student guests at lunch.