Vary Sentence Structure by Using Multiple Verb Tenses

1. Focus

Explain Using Multiple Verb Tenses

Say: When you write a persuasive text, such as a book review, chances are you will use different verb tenses throughout the text and maybe even in the same paragraph. The reason for this is that you are writing about your opinions now, for which you’ll use present tense verbs. And you are writing about a book that was written and published at a previous time, for which you’ll use past tense verbs. As long as you follow grammatical rules to correctly structure your sentences, there is nothing wrong with using multiple verb tenses. In fact, using multiple verb tenses will help you write more clearly. Today I’m going to show you how to vary your sentence structure by using multiple verb tenses.

Model Using Multiple Verb Tenses

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Ask students to listen for multiple verb tenses as you read aloud the passage from “Oh, My Aching Back!”

“The Princess and the Pea” is not your typical fairy tale. Hans Christian Andersen thought the tale would amuse people. Well, he was right! Everyone will enjoy this story.

Modeling Text

Say: In this paragraph, the author uses three verb tenses—present, past, and future. The first sentence uses the present tense verb is. The sentence states the author’s opinion about the story, “The Princess and the Pea.” This takes place now, so the verb tense is present. The next sentence uses the past tense verb thought to tell what Hans Christian Andersen thought in the past, when he wrote the story. The following sentence also uses a past tense verb, was. The last sentence uses the future tense verb will to tell about something that will happen in the future—readers will read the story and find that they enjoy it. Even though the author uses multiple verb tenses, the paragraph makes perfect sense.
2. Rehearse

Practice Using Multiple Verb Tenses

Display the practice text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

I liked the story very much. The author used many words that were new to me.

Practice Text

Ask students to work with a partner to revise the sentences using multiple verb tenses. Encourage students to write a third sentence using a future tense verb. (For example: “I will try to use some of these words when I write.”) Pairs should write down their sentences and be prepared to read them to the class and explain how using multiple verb tenses improved the text.

Share Practice Sentences

Bring students together and invite partners to read aloud their sentences and explain their revisions. Record students’ sentences and post these as models for students to use as they draft or revise their persuasive text.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that we can use multiple verb tenses in the same persuasive text and even in the same paragraph. Remember that each sentence must follow the correct grammatical rules for verb tenses. As you work on your persuasive book reviews, look for opportunities to make your writing clearer by using multiple verb tenses.

Encourage students to pay attention to their use of verb tenses as they draft and edit their book reviews. During student conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite two or three students to share passages from their book reviews in which they have used multiple verb tenses correctly and effectively.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

While other students complete the partner practice activity, work with beginning ELs to practice saying and writing complete sentences in present and past tenses. Say: I walked to school. I walk to my seat. Use gestures to ensure comprehension. Write the sentences on chart paper and read them aloud with students. Point out the -ed ending of regular past tense verbs.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity.

All Levels

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: persuasive/persuasivo(a); verb/el verbo.