

3.3 Verbs - Tense Shift and Modals

Tense Shift provides a tool to look for unintentional shift in past, current, and future tense verbs. The program prints all sentences in your writing while flagging words that are usually past tense verbs and future tense verbs.

PAST TENSE - Verbs like **WAS**↔ or **LIVED**↔ are flagged to denote words that are probably past tense verbs. Although most flags will be accurate, some words have more than one meaning. Words like **DOVE**↔ can be used to denote the past tense of "dive" but can also be used to denote the peaceful pigeon. Likewise, some past tense verbs can also be used as adjectives. Words like **LOST**↔ can be used as the past tense of "loose" and can also be correctly used as an adjective as in "a lost iPod."

PRESENT TENSE - These verbs are not flagged.

FUTURE TENSE - Helping verbs like →**WILL** and →**SHALL** and →**GOING TO** and words that end in 'LL like →**WE'LL** are flagged to denote future tense helping verbs.

More Tense Shift Information

A verb tense shift changes the timeframe described in writing - past, present, or future.

General Rules

- Use *past tense* verbs to describe events completed in the past or to make statements or generalizations about events that occurred in the past.
- Use *present tense* verbs to describe facts or to make generalizations that are true now and will continue to be true.
- Use *tense shifts* ONLY when describing completed actions and generalizations that are true now and will continue to be true. Otherwise, use only one tense.
- Use *future tense* when describing actions that will occur in the future.

Tense shift is often appropriate - "Bowman was my grandfather's name and now it is mine." However, oftentimes, writers unintentionally and erroneously shift tense.

Examples

Original sentence - Setha **LEFT**↔ the college and starts her car.

Unintentional tense shift - "**LEFT**" is past tense and "starts" is present tense.

Revision - Setha left the college and started her car. (All verbs now past tense)

Original sentence - Sam **LIKED**↔ everything about Stephanie until he finds out about her father.

Unintentional tense shift - "**LIKED**" is past tense and "finds" is present tense.

Revision - Sam liked everything about Stephanie until he found out about her father. (All verbs now past tense)

Original sentence - The marching band **WAS**↔ almost perfect and is still practicing.

Unintentional tense shift - "**WAS**" is past tense and "is" is present tense.

Revision - The marching band is almost perfect and is still improving. (All verbs now current tense)

Original sentence - A return to that scene provides insight about the man that →**WILL** become her best friend.

?Unintentional? tense shift - "provides" is present tense and "**WILL**" is future tense.

The tense shift might or might not be intentional.

Possible Revision 1 - A return to that scene provided insight about the man that became her best friend. (All verbs - past tense)

Possible Revision 2 - A return to that scene provides insight about the man that becomes her best friend. (All verbs - current tense)

Possible Revision 3 - A return to that scene will provide insight about the man that will become her best friend. (All verbs - future tense)

Tempest

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The Tempest

William Shakespeare's play, the TEMPEST, makes an attempt to envelop the reader in the intangible world of art. It isn't enough in this play to simply watch one art work emerge Shakespeare's own but we somehow see art in greater depth as Prospero himself creates another art work within the play and even another small play within his own. It is possible to

consider Prospero as a sort of Wizard of Oz who manipulates situations and observes results. If this is not untrue, then one should enjoy the play as Prospero's own artifact and thus trace his development as an artist in the progression of the play itself. In this light, you can see the thesis of the paper emerge: the TEMPEST is a sort of synthesis or descriptive definition of the creative process or character of the artist. This topic be **APPROACHED** from the standpoint of Prospero's pure character analysis only. However, so many elements in the play demand recognition in the **PROPOSED** context that it seems necessary to keep Prospero and his art clearly **DELINEATED** while might can actually be inseparable.

I think the tempest offers a wild beginning for Prospero's work. The characters are at odds, the natural elements are in chaos - in fact, the entire situation lacks control of any kind. The reader later discovers that Prospero alone has mastery of the seemingly chaotic situation and possesses the skill to "command these elements to silence, and work the peace of the present."

In the realm of his own creation, it is not a position which guarantees success, but the ability to confront the present moment or inspiration and should bring it to fulfillment. The importance of the present (the now-time finds constant reiteration in the play. It is the Boatswain who first exemplifies the need for direct confrontation with the elements. Prospero, too, reveals a special sensitivity to the present. It is in confronting almost as though he senses that the "fullness of time has come and he must bring all his powers to bear on the object at hand. He experiences the imminence of the time which could of **MADE** of him a true artist and **WAS** proud of. In his conversations with Miranda, he refers to the concept of time frequently. Eventually he is able to clearly state his realization that he must act on the possibilities which are open to him now. In short, Prospero's awareness that he must be open to the opportunities which are to come to him, is an important beginning in his development as an artist.

A return to the tempest scene should reveal more themes regarding art which **WILL** continue to advance the action. A tension in the physical situation itself parallels another tension on the artistic level. In this melange, the surge of emotion and the need for tranquillity clash. The devastating power of passion becomes clear in the action of the King's men, especially Antonio and Sebastian. They have no patience and demand immediate measures to be taken without due consideration. Throughout the play, these men work against the simple vision which finds good in all things. As such, they represent the antithesis of art. Their role is to bring about confusion where there is a need for the unity which art can provide. Enough **SAID** about that.

In contrast to these "actionists", the Boatswain echoes a plea which is **REITERATED** often: "Silence!" Silence provides an atmosphere conducive to the expression of great thoughts. As well as being the absence of external noise, it presupposes an interior order capable of reaching out to chaos and unifying about. Prospero needs to achieve this kind of silence if he is to grow as an artist. Back in Milan when he **LIVED** solely for **CONCENTRATED** intellectual studies, Prospero **PROMOTED** disorder within his kingdom. He no doubt **LIVED** in a silent world, that of the pseudoscholar, but his silence **WAS** not genuine. Living on a primitive island for twelve years, Prospero has **DONE** nothing but indulge his whims in "rough magic". He has **DONE** much, but none of his activities **BEEN** able to effect order where it **WAS** most **NEEDED**. To achieve integrity, Prospero must somehow merge the active and contemplative sides of his nature.

The end of the tempest scene, too, as well as its characters, has **WENT** to a further bearing on the beginning of the creative process. As the scene fades, the total impression is one of seeming disintegration and chaos. The characters scatter, losing contact with each other. The resulting suspense gives a feeling of incompleteness, but as the next scene opens, the controlling factor of the tempest is **REVEALED**. Prospero, then, enters into the crisis of his life as a man and as an artist by creating a tempest. It is only the beginning, but the preliminary requisites for art are present in it to be **WORKED** out in the remainder of Shakespeare's play and in Prospero's own artistic development.

Modals

[use base word⇒] The **[use base word⇒]** code precedes a modal helping verb when the main verb has an -s or an -ing ending. That code reminds you to change the main verb to its base form, the form that does not have an -s or an -ing ending.

[might be able to⇒] The **[might be able to⇒]** code precedes "might can" or "might could." That code reminds you that native English speakers use "might be able to" instead of "might can" or "might could."

Only sentences with flagged modal errors are printed.

More Modals Problems Information

Original sentence - A student should **[use base word⇒]** studies every day after classes.

Revision - A student should study every day after classes.

Original sentence - A writing teacher **[might be able to⇒]** might can help you.

Revision - A writing teacher might be able to help you.

Writer's Workbench found **3 modal error(s)**.

If this is not untrue, then one should **[use base word⇒]** enjoys the play as Prospero's own artifact and thus trace his development as an artist in the progression of the play itself.

However, so many elements in the play demand recognition in the proposed context that it seems necessary to keep Prospero and his art clearly delineated while **[might be able to⇒]** might can actually be inseparable.

In the realm of his own creation, it is not a position which guarantees success, but the ability to confront the present moment or inspiration and should **[use base word⇒]** bringing it to fulfillment.