

When one action occurred before another, the past perfect tense can be used to indicate the earlier action, with the subsequent action in the simple past tense.

participle of cells that had been irradiated [past perfect] were assayed [past perfect] had elected [past perfect] to undergo surgery completed [past] questionnaires. In rare cases in which one action occurred while another was ongoing, the past progressive is used [past progressive], the temperature was raised [past] 1°C per collected [past] . In such cases, the past progressive is used for surgery, nurses



Results: Because the experiments described in the text were completed before the paper was written, the results section of a manuscript is also largely written using the past tense. In certain cases, however, the present tense is needed. As described above for the introduction section, the present tense is appropriate when referring to the entire paper or to individual elements of the manuscript (e.g., figures, tables, sections, results, or data). Examples of statements for which the present tense is best include demonstrate that magnesium is essential for enzymatic function, and study, we report the discovery of a new species of frog. Note that sometimes two tenses can be found within the same sentence: [past tense] in the absence of magnesium, our results indicate [present tense] that magnesium is [present tense] absolutely required. The present tense is appropriate for the last verb because the observation extends beyond the specific experiment referenced in the first part of the sentence; it is now considered a statement of fact based on the results.



Discussion: The discussion section follows the same rules as the previous sections of the manuscript. When referring to specific results or methods, use the past tense, but use the present when presenting may include the future tense. s part



Abstract: The verb tense chosen for the abstract should be based on the section of the text to which each sentence corresponds. For example, introductory statements describing the current understanding of the issue should use the present tense, references to previous research should use the present perfect, and descriptions of the methods and results should use the past tense. Indeed, one study of verb tense in English medical abstracts has revealed that the three most commonly used tenses are past, present, and present perfect,⁶ in line with the conventions described here.

In this paper, we have offered some advice for choosing verb tense in a scientific manuscript. Please note that these suggestions are not absolute rules, but following these guidelines will help your text conform to the conventions of scientific writing. Above all, it is important to be consistent with your choice of tense. If you have any questions about your writing, please contact us at AskAnExpert@journalexperts.com. Best of luck!

¹ Am Midl Nat 155(2):383-394 (2006)
² Lin P-Y and Y- A guide to write a scientific paper for new writers. *Microsurgery* 32(1):80-85 (2012)
³ Women Birth 21(3):113-117 (2008)
⁴ Eukaryotic Cell Instructions to Authors http://ec.asm.org/site/misc/journal-ita_abb.xhtml#01
⁵ The ACS Style Guide: A Manual for Authors and Editors ed. JS Dodd (Washington, DC: American Chemical Society, 1997)
⁶ Salager-D A text- *Engl Spec Purp* 11(2):93-113 (1992)