

A Mother in Mannville (page 68)**Grammar SkillBuilder: Consistent Verb Tense**

Key Concept: Writers must stick with one tense when describing actions related to a single period or event or when writing about a series of events.

Verb Tense

Avoid shifting tenses when relating events that occur at the same time. A shift in tense can occur incorrectly within a sentence or within related sentences.

Incorrect: While the narrator **worked** in the cabin, Jerry **chops** and **stacks** a huge pile of firewood.

Correct: While the narrator **worked** in the cabin, Jerry **chopped** and **stacked** a huge pile of firewood.

Activity

Read the sentences below, and write *correct* or *incorrect* in the parentheses. Rewrite incorrect sentences.

Example:

Before she came to the mountains, the writer is very busy. (*incorrect*)

Before she came to the mountains, the writer was very busy.

1. After his mother died, Jerry is sent to the orphanage. ()

2. When the narrator sees how much wood Jerry had chopped, she gave him a quarter. ()

3. Jerry said that his mother sent him a pair of skates. ()

4. Jerry takes care of the dog while the writer was away. ()

5. Perhaps Jerry was pretending that the writer is his mother. ()
