

## COMMON ERRORS IN GRAMMAR AND USAGE

### ***Voice*** - Prefer the **active voice**

Poor - *The experiment was designed by Gould (1980).*

Better - *Gould (1980) designed the experiment.*

***Verb tense*** - Use the **past tense** to express an action or a condition that occurred at a time in the past, as when discussing another researcher's work and when reporting your results.

- Incorrect - *Bandura (1986) argues that high self-efficacy is beneficial to optimal functioning.*
- Correct - *Bandura (1986) argued that high self-efficacy is beneficial to optimal functioning.*

***Verb tense*** - Use the **present tense** to express a past action or condition that did not occur at a specific, definite time or an action beginning in the past and continuing to the present.

- Incorrect - *Since that discovery, investigators used that method to reduce anxiety.*
- Correct - *Since that discovery, investigators have used that method to reduce anxiety.*

***Verb Tense*** - Use the **past tense** to describe your results (*anxiety decreased significantly*); use **present tense** to discuss your results and to present conclusions (*results of this experiment indicate that anxiety-reducing interventions . . .*).

### ***Agreement in number of Pronoun and Antecedent***

- Incorrect - *When a boy was called on in class, they were usually given more time to answer.*
- Correct - *When boys were called on in class, they were usually given more time to answer.*
- Correct - *When a boy was called on in class, he was usually given more time to answer.*

When a sentence contains the pronouns *they* or *their*, be certain you have a **plural** antecedent.