

Shifting Points Of View: Stick With One

When writing, keep your point of view as consistent as possible, otherwise you'll confuse your reader. A shift can occur in number, subject, tense, and voice.

1. Shifts in number. Keep things singular or plural:
Quilts are nice, but it requires hand washing.
Quilts are nice, but they require hand washing.
2. Shifts in subject:
If *you* practice your song, *it* will be a good recital.
If *you* practice your song, *you* 'll have a good recital.
If *she* practices her song, *she* 'll have a good recital.
3. Shifts in tense. No changing between present, past, and future:
John *drove* home and *went* inside. He *sits* down *taken* off his shoes. He *is* ready for dinner.
John *drove* home and *went* inside. He *sat* down and *took* off his shoes. He *was* ready for dinner.
4. Shifts in voice. Keep it active or passive:
She *did* a great job, but no praise *was received*.
She *did* a great job, but *received* no praise.

Shifts in tense and voice seem to be a challenge for some writers. It's best to write in present tense and active voice whenever possible because you'll be showing *current* events as they occur.