

# **Use of tense in writing...**

Past and present tense in scientific writing are used a little differently than the way they are employed in everyday.

## In citing the work of others....

### Past

- used to indicate studies performed in the past.
  - *e.g. Smith et. al. found that marijuana was addictive.*  
*or. Smith et. al. found that marijuana was not addictive*
- can indicate conversational result...
  - *e.g. Smith et al. found that marijuana was addictive while Jones et. al. found that it was not.*
  - *Compare to “Smith et al. found that marijuana is addictive while Jones et. al. found that it is not.*

### Present

- used to show that past work has led to a general “true” conclusion.
  - *e.g. Marijuana is addictive (Smith et. al.).*

Past and present tense in scientific writing are used a little differently than the way they are employed in everyday.

## In citing your own work...

### Past

- used to indicate specific results of current study.
  - *e.g. compound X was tested against several known targets and was found to be effective against several membrane drug transporters. These data were confirmed in vivo using several strains of pathogenic bacteria where it was shown that the uptake of penicillin was inhibited by Compound X. Compound X is an antagonist of penicillin uptake.*

### Present

- used to show that past work (even with in the current study) has led to a general true conclusion.
  - *e.g. compound X was tested against several known targets and was found to be effective against several membrane drug transporters. These data were confirmed in vivo using several strains of pathogenic bacteria where it was shown that the uptake of penicillin was inhibited by Compound X. Compound X is an antagonist of penicillin uptake.*

**The end**