

# UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER

## 20+ have and unlike

modal verbs because they can function alone in a sentence, acting as the main verb.

### Have+ Past Tense Verb

- 1) This construction indicates the Present Perfect tense, and can be used to describe an action that happened at an unspecified time in the past:
  - x Elisa ~~has discussed~~ her options with the counselor and decided to drop the class.  
At some point, Elisa talked to her counselor, then decided to drop the class.
- 2) It can also be used to describe an action that began in the past and is still going on.
  - x Gene and George ~~have worked~~ at the deli for two years.  
Gene and George started working at the deli two years ago, and are still working there.

### Had+ Past Tense Verb

- 1) This construction indicates the Past Perfect Tense, and is used to describe actions that began and ended

## Was+ Verbing

1) This construction indicates the ~~es~~ Past Continuous tense, and can be used to describe an action that was in progress in the past, often to set the scene for an action that interrupted.

x Elisa ~~was~~ discussing her options with the counselor when the power went out.

Elisa was in her counselor's office, and while they were talking there was a power outage.

3) It can also be used to describe several actions that were in progress simultaneously in the past.

x Gene ~~was~~ washing the cutting boards and George ~~was~~ working at the counter.

Gene and George ~~were~~ working on different tasks at the same time.

Practice: Though helping verbs have an important role in writing, remember that most writing is clearer in the