

Present perfect

The present perfect tense is one of the common verb tenses in English, used to show an action that happened in the past that is directly related to the present, such as actions that are still continuing or that indicate a change over time.

Don't let the name confuse you—even though the word present is there, the present perfect tense deals with actions that happened or started in the past. In fact, the present perfect tense is often used interchangeably with the simple past tense, although there are some special situations in which you can only use one or the other, also explained below.

How do you use the present perfect tense?

In the present perfect tense, the *main verbs* **always** use the *auxiliary verbs* (helper verbs) **has** or **have**. The main verb takes a participle form, specifically the *past participle*. The past participle is often the same form as the simple past form of the verb, unless it's an irregular verb, which each have their own unique past participle form. We explain in more detail how to form them in our guide to participles.

Only the *auxiliary verbs* are **conjugated** to fit the subject-verb agreement in the present perfect tense; the past participle of the main verb remains the same no matter what the subject is. Generally, you use **have** for all subjects except the singular third-person, which instead uses **has**.

First-person: I **have come** a long way.

Second person: You **have come** a long way.

Third-person plural: They **have come** a long way.

Third-person singular: He/she/it **has come** a long way.

