

Language Focus



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Present Perfect Tense

The present perfect tense is employed in a sentence to represent an action that just happened in the recent past and still has its effect in the present or an action that represents an indefinite time in the past.

Structure and Formula of the Present Perfect Tense

The general formula of the present perfect tense is as described below:

Subject + am/is/are + present participle (verb+ing) + the rest of the sentence

The structure of the present perfect tense can be divided into three kinds of sentence:

Positive	Negative	Interrogative	Negative Interrogative
Subject + have/has + past participle + the rest of the sentence	Subject + have/has + not + past participle + the rest of the sentence	Have/has + subject + past participle + the rest of the sentence	Have/has + subject + not + past participle + the rest of the sentence (or) Haven't / hasn't + subject + past participle + the rest of the sentence
Examples:	Examples:	Examples:	Examples:
I have finished my work.	I have not finished my work.	Have I finished my work?	Haven't I finished my work?
You have finished your work.	You have not finished your work.	Have you finished your work?	Haven't you finished your work?
He has finished his work.	He has not finished his work.	Has he finished his work?	Hasn't he finished his work?
She has finished her work.		Has she finished her work?	Hasn't she finished her work?
		Have they finished their work?	Haven't they finished their work?
			Have you not finished your work?
			Has she not finished her work?
			Has he not finished his work?
			Have they not finished their work?

We use present perfect tense for several situation as follow:

Unfinished Actions

1. We use this tense when we want to talk about unfinished actions or states or habits that started in the past and continue to the present. Usually we use it to say 'how long' and we need 'since' or 'for'. We often use stative verbs.

- I've known this coffee shop since 1994.
- She's lived in Banjarnegara for seven years.
- I've worked at Google company for six months.

'Since' and 'For'

We use 'since' with a fixed time in the past (2019, April 23rd, last year). The fixed time can be another action, which is in the past simple (since I was at school, since I arrived).

- I've known Sam since 2002.
- I've liked candy since I was a child.
- She's been here since 2 p.m.

We use 'for' with a period of time (2 hours, three years, six months).

- I've known Romeo for ten years.
- I've been hungry for hours.
- She's had a cold for a week.

Finished Actions

2. I have been to London.

- They have visited Japan three times.
- We have never seen horror film.

3. With an unfinished time word (this month, this week, today). The period of time is still continuing.

- I haven't seen her this month.
- She's drunk three cups of coffee today.
- I've already moved house twice this year!

We CAN'T use the present perfect with a finished time word.

- NOT:

4.A finished action with a result in the present (focus on result). We often use the present perfect to talk about something that happened in the recent past, but that is still true or important now. Sometimes we can use the past simple here, especially in American English.

- I've lost my keys (so I can't get into my house).
- She's hurt her leg (so she can't play tennis today).
- They've missed the bus (so they will be late).

5. We can also use the present perfect to talk about something that happened recently, even if there isn't a clear result in the present. This is common when we want to introduce news and we often use the words 'just / yet / already / recently'. However, the past simple is also correct in these cases, especially in US English.

- The Queen has given a speech.
- I've just seen Lucy.
- The Mayor has announced a new plan for the railways.

Been and Gone

In this tense, we use both 'been' and 'gone' as the past participle of 'go', but in slightly different circumstances. We use 'been' (often when we talk about life experience) to mean that the person we're talking about visited the place and came back.

Exercise

1. Bob _____ the window. (paint)
2. She _____ roses in her lawn. (plant)
3. I _____ to Rome. (not, be)
4. Everybody in the class _____ the assignment. (complete)
5. The poet _____ a romantic poem. (write)
6. Alex _____ Spanish. (learn)
7. They _____ the football. (not, play)
8. The friends _____ to restaurant for dinner. (be)
9. My mom _____ meal for me. (cook)
10. The kids _____ the glass. (break)