

PRESENT PERFECT

DEFINITION OF THE PRESENT PERFECT TENSE

The present perfect is used to indicate a link between the present and the past. The time of the action is **before now but not specified**, and we are often more interested in the **result** than in the action itself.

BE CAREFUL! There may be a verb tense in your language with a similar form, but the meaning is probably NOT the same.

THE PRESENT PERFECT IS USED TO DESCRIBE

- An action or situation that started in the past and continues in the present. *I **have lived** in Bristol since 1984* (= and I still do.)
- An action performed during a period that has not yet finished. *She **has been** to the cinema twice this week* (= and the week isn't over yet.)
- A repeated action in an unspecified period between the past and now. *We **have visited** Portugal several times.*
- An action that was completed in the very recent past, expressed by 'just'. *I **have just finished** my work.*
- An action when the time is not important. *He **has read** 'War and Peace'.* (= the result of his reading is important)

Note: When we want to give or ask details about when, where, who, we use the simple past. Read more about choosing between the present perfect and the simple past tenses ([/english-resources/english-grammar/present-perfect-vs-simple-past/](#)).

ACTIONS STARTED IN THE PAST AND CONTINUING IN THE PRESENT

- They **haven't lived** here for years.
- She **has worked** in the bank for five years.
- We **have had** the same car for ten years.
- **Have you played** the piano since you were a child?

WHEN THE TIME PERIOD REFERRED TO HAS NOT FINISHED

- *I **have worked** hard **this week**.*
- *It **has rained** a lot **this year**.*
- *We **haven't seen** her **today**.*

ACTIONS REPEATED IN AN UNSPECIFIED PERIOD BETWEEN THE PAST AND NOW.

- They **have seen** that film six times
- It **has happened** several times already.
- She **has visited** them frequently.
- We **have eaten** at that restaurant many times.

ACTIONS COMPLETED IN THE VERY RECENT PAST (+JUST)

- ***Have you just finished** work?*
- *I **have just eaten**.*
- *We **have just seen** her.*
- ***Has he just left**?*

WHEN THE PRECISE TIME OF THE ACTION IS NOT IMPORTANT OR NOT KNOWN

- Someone **has eaten** my soup!
- **Have you seen** 'Gone with the Wind'?
- **She's studied** Japanese, Russian, and English.

Read more about using the present perfect with the words "ever", "never", "already", and "yet" (</english-resources/english-grammar/present-perfect-ever-never-already-yet/>), and about using the present perfect with the words "for" and "since" (</english-resources/english-grammar/present-perfect-and/>).

FORMING THE PRESENT PERFECT

The present perfect of any verb is composed of two elements : the appropriate form of the auxiliary verb **to have** (present tense), plus the past participle of the main verb. The past participle of a regular verb is **base+ed**, e.g. *played*, *arrived*, *looked*. For irregular verbs, see the **Table of irregular verbs** in the section called '**Verbs**'.

Affirmative		
Subject	to have	past participle
She	has	visited.
Negative		
Subject	to have + not	past participle
She	has not (hasn't)	visited.
Interrogative		
to have	subject	past participle
Has	she	visited?
Negative interrogative		
to have + not	subject	past participle
Hasn't	she	visited?

TO WALK, PRESENT PERFECT

Affirmative	Negative	Interrogative
I have walked	I haven't walked	Have I walked?
You have walked	You haven't walked.	Have you walked?
He, she, it has walked	He, she, hasn't walked	Has he, she, it walked?
We have walked	We haven't walked	Have we walked?
You have walked	You haven't walked	Have you walked?
They have walked	They haven't walked	Have they walked?



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