

GRAMMAR

Using present perfect effectively

LEVEL

Intermediate (B1)

NUMBER

EN_B1_1032G

LANGUAGE

English



Learning outcomes

- I can use the present perfect to talk about professional and personal experiences.
- I can distinguish between the use of the present perfect and the past simple when talking about the past.

Warm-up

Judith Smith is a 32-year-old writer from London.

1. **Read** the document.
2. **Discuss** the questions.

What kind of document do you think this is?

What might this document be for?

Name: Judith Smith.
Address: 24 Cross Street,
SW1 ERF London
Email: judithsmith@mail.co.uk



Summary

Hard-working professional with extensive experience as a travel writer and content editor, mainly covering South-East Asia.

Professional experience

Travel writer (2010– present)



Judith meets Mara

1. **Read** the dialogue. 2. **Answer** the questions below.

Mara: So, I've had a look at your CV, Judith. And I have to say, you've achieved quite a lot in your career so far.

Judith: Thank you! Yes, as a writer, I've written for almost every British travel magazine, mostly covering South-East Asia.

Mara: Have you covered almost all the region, then?

Judith: Yes, I have. Over the past few years, I've travelled across all of Cambodia and Vietnam. I've also done a bit of work on South Korea, but not a lot.

Mara: You must know Cambodia and Vietnam quite well then. I see you've also worked for the *New York Times*. What was the last article you wrote for them?

Judith: Last April, so almost a year ago, I wrote a piece for them about Hoi An. It's an ancient town in Central Vietnam. Maybe you've heard about it?



1. Who do you think Mara is?
2. Why does Judith know Cambodia and Vietnam well?





Looking at the present perfect

In her job interview with Mara, Judith uses lots of examples of the **present perfect** when talking about her work as a writer. Let's look at an example:



You've achieved quite a lot in your career so far!



As a writer, I've written for almost every British travel magazine.

- We use the present perfect to **connect a completed event in the past to the present**.
- **So far** = *until now or up to this point in time*.

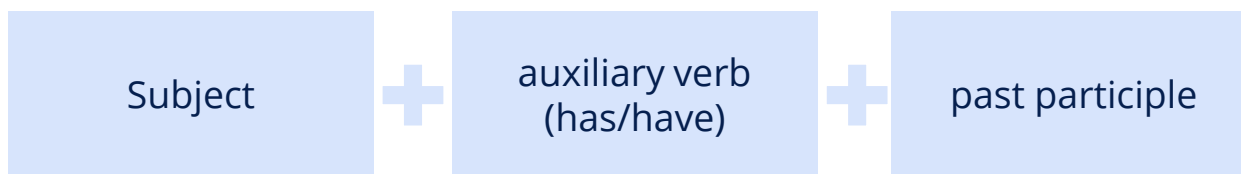
Let's review how to form the present perfect

1. **Read** the two sentences.
2. **Review** the present perfect form below.

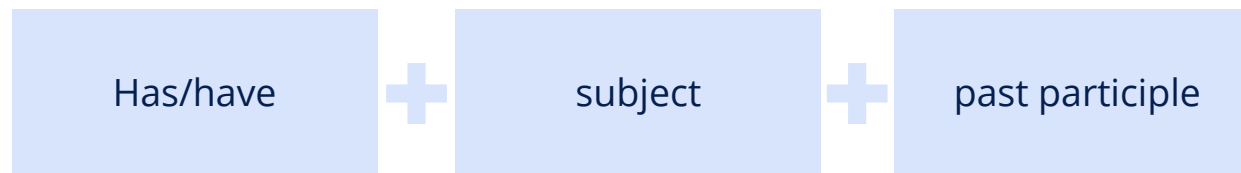
As a writer, I've written for almost every British travel magazine.

Have you covered almost all the region?

Present perfect simple (affirmative)



Present perfect simple (questions)





A closer look at Judith's interview

1. Find more examples of the **present perfect**.
2. **Work** as a group or in breakout rooms.

Mara: So, I've had a look at your CV, Judith. And I have to say, you've achieved quite a lot in your career so far.

Judith: Thank you! Yes, as a writer, I've written for almost every British travel magazine, mostly covering South-East Asia.

Mara: Have you covered almost all the region, then?

Judith: Yes, I have. Over the past few years, I've travelled across all of Cambodia and Vietnam. I've also done a bit of work on South Korea, but not a lot.

Mara: You must know Cambodia and Vietnam quite well then. I see you've also worked for the *New York Times*. What was the last article you wrote for them?

Judith: Last April, so almost a year ago, I wrote a piece for them about Hoi An. It's an ancient town in Central Vietnam. Maybe you've heard about it!

Example 1:

Example 2:

Example 3:



Looking more closely at the present perfect

1. **Read** the sentences.
2. **Choose** the correct answers in the blue box.

Over the past few years, I've travelled across all of Cambodia and Vietnam.

I've also done some work on South Korea, but not a lot.

- **Judith travelled across Cambodia and Vietnam. Which statement is correct:**
 - a) We know exactly when she travelled across Cambodia and Vietnam.
 - b) We don't know exactly when she travelled across Cambodia and Vietnam.
- **Judith has done some work on South Korea. Which statement is correct:**
 - a) We know exactly when she did some work on South Korea.
 - b) We don't know exactly when she did some work on South Korea.

Looking more closely at the present perfect

We often use the **past simple** together with the **present perfect**. However, we **do not** use the two tenses in the same way. Compare these examples from the interview:

Over the past few years, I've travelled across all of Cambodia and Vietnam.

Last April, so almost a year ago, I wrote a piece for the *New York Times* about the ancient town of Hoi An.

Answer the questions:

- In which sentence does Judith talk about a specific article she wrote in the past?
- Which tense does she use in this sentence?
- Does she give an exact date?

What's the rule?

- ✓ He **has travelled** all around Russia.
(= Sometime in the past; we don't know when)
- ✗ He **has travelled** all around Russia *in the 1990s*.

When we give an exact date for a completed event **in the past**, which tense should we **not** use?

Now it's your turn to be Judith

Choose two of the pictures below, showing other destinations Judith has been to, together with the dates. Now, imagine you are Judith and you are still in the interview with Mara.

Write a short response to Mara's question in the box below. Be careful which tense you use! Do the pictures include an exact date or not?



Sydney

December 2018



Hong Kong

A few times
in the past



Hanoi

May – June 2019
August – Nov 2019



West Cambodia

Many times
in the past



Osaka

September 2015

Which other destinations have you visited, Judith?

Well, Mara, I've also spent lots of time in...



What have you achieved in your career so far?

Complete the sentences for yourself. Pay attention to the tense you use!

In the past few years...



Last year... in...

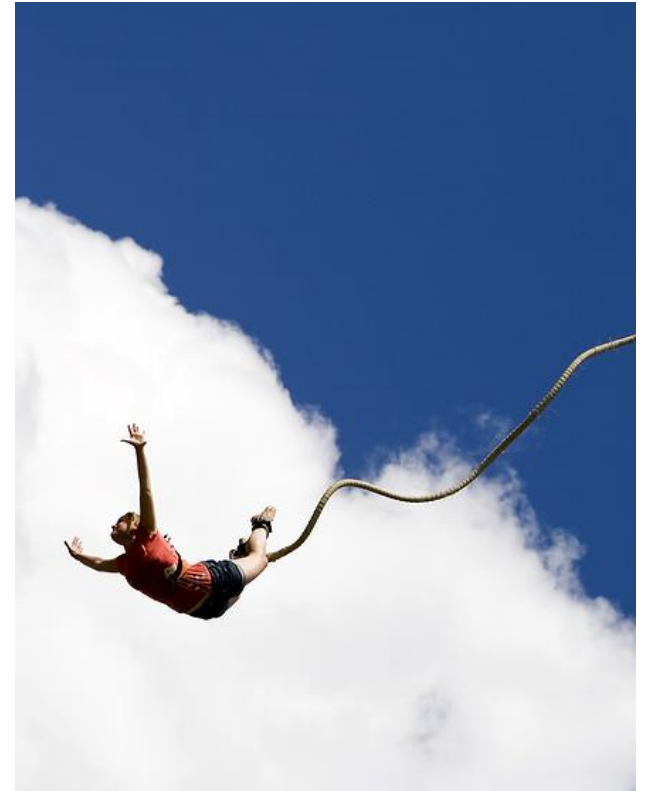
What have been some memorable experiences in your life up to now?

Be careful with tenses when giving exact dates or specific information!

What are some interesting countries you've visited?

What are some weird foods you've tasted? Or some strange jobs you've had?

Who are some famous people you've met?





End of the lesson

Idiom

To have had an out-of-body experience!

A feeling of being outside one's own body, typically of floating and being able to observe oneself from a distance.



Additional practice



Why do we use the present perfect?

Remember: we use the **present perfect** to connect a completed event in the past to the **present**. **Match the sentences** on the left in the **present perfect** with their equivalent in the present simple on the right.

1 I've lost my keys!

2 We've been to Thailand several times.

3 Have you tried gumbo?

4 She's worked all over the world!

5 He's gained extensive video-editing experience.

a Do you know what gumbo tastes like?

b She has experience working in many different countries.

c Now, he's very good at editing videos.

d I can't find my keys now.

e We know Thailand very well.



An indefinite or definite time?

Read the sentences below and decide if they refer to an indefinite or definite time in the past.

- 1 Have you ever worked abroad?
- 2 In 2017, I completed my MA degree in finance.
- 3 He's been to Taiwan many times.
- 4 She worked at a tech company from 2012–2016.
- 5 Peter has worked with this software before.
- 6 I visited Vietnam in 2018.

A: exact time of the action is *not* specified

B: exact time of the action is specified





Choose the correct answer

Then, discuss your answers with your teacher. Why did you choose each one?

1 We _____ back from our trip to London last night.

a. have come

b. came

2 I _____ Stephen many times before. You don't need to introduce us.

a. have met

b. met

3 Let's discuss your career. _____ you ever _____ in a large team?

a. Have / worked

b. Did / work



Ask and answer

Ask one of your **classmates** about their **professional experience**.



Have you ever worked for an international company?

From 2005 to 2012, I worked as an engineer for a Chinese company.

Oh! Interesting. What's the name of the company?



Discuss

What are some memorable things a friend or a member of your family has done?



Can you talk about a specific event? Share with the class!



Answer key

- S.3** 1. A CV/resumé 2. A lot of skills and knowledge gained over time
3. South-East Asia; Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Laos etc.
- S.4** 1. It's a job interview; Mara is the interviewer
2. Mara can see Judith has achieved a lot in her career and has written for almost every British travel magazine.
3. Because she has travelled across all of Cambodia and Vietnam.
4. The last article she wrote was about Hoi An.
- S.7** I've had; Have you covered; I've travelled; I've also done; You've also worked; You've heard
- S.8** b.)
b.)
- S.9** 1. In the second sentence (Last April, so almost...)
2. Past simple tense
3. Yes, last April (one year ago at the time of speaking)



Answer key

S.9 4. When we give an exact date for a completed event in the past, we should not use the present perfect.

S.10 **Suggested answers:** I've been to Hong Kong a few times in the past but don't know it that well; I've visited West Cambodia many times in the past. It's one of my favourite areas!

I covered Hanoi twice in 2019, as I was there between May and June of that year. I don't know much about either Osaka or Sydney. I last visited Sydney in December 2018 and Osaka even longer ago, in September 2015.

S.16 1. d 2. e 3. a 4. b 5. c

S.17 **A:** 1; 3; 5 **B:** 2; 4; 6

S.18 1. b 2. a 3. a



Summary

Forming the present perfect tense:

- We form it using subject + has/have + past participle
- We form questions by inverting *has/have* and the subject: *have/has* + subject + past participle...?

Using the present perfect:

- We use the present perfect to connect a **completed event** in the past to the present. The event, action or state has a result that is relevant in the present.

Further uses of the present perfect:

- We often use the present perfect to talk about an event, action or state that happened at an indefinite (not exact) time in the past.
- Either we don't know when it took place, or it's not important to what we're saying.

Comparing present perfect and past simple:

- When we want to talk about a definite time in the past, we cannot use the present perfect. We must use the past simple.
- For instance: We've been to France OR We went to France last week but NOT ~~We've been to France last week.~~



Vocabulary

extensive experience

to cover (a news story)

so far

