

The Use of the Present Perfect Tense (Level B-C)

The Present Perfect Simple is used to denote past action with the present result, in particular:

1. Action (un)completed by now, the time is not specified.
E.g. a) I have already booked the tickets to Egypt. b) Michael hasn't arrived yet. c) Have you read any interesting books recently? d) Guess what! Mary and John have split up. e) He has asked me out for a date! I'm so happy! f) "Thanks God. I've done my duty." (admiral Nelson)

2. State or action in unfinished period of past.
E.g. a) I have kept all his letters so far. b) How many cigarettes have you smoked today? c) He has made good progress this semester. d) How long have you known her? e) They've been married for 10 years. f) The British Isles have been invaded many times throughout their history. g) I haven't been to Italy since 2005. h) We've had this car for more than 7 years now. i) I've been up to my eyes in work lately.

3. Life experience.
E.g. a) He has always been very serious. b) Her life has been very interesting. (She is still alive). c) Have you ever picked up flowers in the Alps? d) We've never been to London. e) She has travelled a lot. f) This is the third time you've been late this week.

Compare the use of the Past Simple and Present Perfect. Underline the "signal" words.

Past Simple	Present Perfect
I knew nothing about that yesterday.	I've known him for 4 years.
When were you last to Paris?	Have you ever been to Paris?
Agatha Christie's "The Mousetrap", first written as a radio play, then became a theatre performance.	Agatha Christie's "The Mousetrap" has become the longest-running play ever.
"Once I loved a girl..." (The Beatles)	"I've been in love so many times..." (Tom Jones)
Where did you buy this bag?	Have you bought anything for me?
He kept his promise and helped her.	They've kept their traditions so far.
I didn't see him at the conference.	I haven't seen him since that conference.
I ate a heavy breakfast in the morning.	I've eaten too much today.
I read this article last week.	I've read some articles this week.
Did you enjoy the film?	I've always enjoyed classical music.
He left an hour ago.	He has just left.
When did you get this message?	Have you got the message yet?
She decided to become a doctor after the war.	He's already decided to enter medical school.
I first drove a car when I was 20 years old.	This is the first time I've driven a car.
The Spanish invaded Holland in the 15 th century.	Many foreigners have invaded Britain throughout centuries.
The Mayas dreamt of flying off to space.	People have always dreamt of flying off to space.
What made you become a teacher?	What has become of you?
How did it happen?	What's happened?
Do you know why he didn't call us?	Has he called you lately?
We didn't meet in Rome then.	We've never met before.
I did a lot of silly things after school.	I've done a lot of silly things over the last 5 years.
I was busy at the weekend.	I've been very busy in the last few days.

Exercises

1. Open the brackets using the Present Perfect Tense : proper forms of the auxiliary verb 'have' and Past Participle (have/has + Participle II).

- 1.-You ever (work) in the advertising industry? –No, I.... But I always (dream) about it.
2. –You (catch) anything? –Look at this! It's the biggest trout I ever (hold) in my hands.
3. –What (happen)? – Mary and Jones just (win) the first prize!
4. –You ever (be) seriously injured? – Of course. I (fall) down off the horse, I (break) all my limbs, I (lose) several teeth and I (fight) a tiger!
5. –You (hear) from your classmates lately? – Sure, we (keep) in touch since we left school. –Do you know that Maurice (become) a writer? – Really? How many books he (write)?
6. –How long you (have) this car? –What are you talking about? It's my new car! I just (buy) it.
7. –Although I (visit) Russia several times I never (be) to St. Petersburg. – Really? You should go.
8. –You ever (ride) a horse? –No, never. I always (be) afraid of them. But I (try) jet skiing!
9. –Let's go. Mum already (lay) the table. –But I (not make) my speech yet. You ever (give) a speech?
10. –You (draw) this wonderful picture for me? I just (find) it on my desk!
11. –You ever (fly) a jet plane? –Sure, I (do) fourteen flights so far.
12. –Anybody (see) my textbook? I guess somebody (take) it by mistake.
13. –I (tell) you this is wrong number! It's the third time you (ring) us up!
14. –The boy who (swim) across the English Channel is only fourteen years old!
15. –What a mess! Who (put) the tights on the table? Who (hang) the towels on the standard lamp?

2. 'Been' or 'gone'?

1. I 've just to the shops. Why didn't you tell me to buy eggs?
2. –Where is Nick? – He's just to the shops.
3. –I'm going to the bank. Do you need anything? –No, thank you I'veto the bank recently.
4. –Have you everto Paris? – Yes, I havethere on business several times.
5. –They've to Jamaica. They haven't come back yet. They'veto Jamaica for 2 weeks now.

3. 'For' or 'since'?

1. He's been my teacher last year.
2. I've known her three years.
3. Have you metthe last five years?
4. I haven't been to the theatre.....last month.
5. He's made good progressthis period.
6. He's been promoted twicethe last 3 years.

4. Open the brackets, using the Present Perfect or Past Simple Tense.

Pussy Cat, Pussy Cat, where you (be)?
I (be) to London to look at the Queen.
Pussy Cat, Pussy Cat, what you (do) there?
I (frighten) a mouse under the chair.

1. My father (retire) when he (be) 70. He (buy) a cottage by the sea and (go) to live there. So I (not see) much of him since then.
2. –When you (come) back? – Oh, I (return) just a few hours ago.
3. –You ever (be) to the Holyrood Palace? –Yes, I (be) there when we last (visit) Edinburgh. We also (see) some old castles. Our friends (take) us on a ride over Scotland. It (be) amazing!
4. –How long you (work) as a project manager? – I think I (have) quite a good experience since I (graduate). I (work) for three big construction companies so far. –So, how many years exactly you (work) for Lion's and Co? – For 3 years and a half. –And where you (work) before? –For Intercom, but I (not like) it there. –But how long you (work) there? –Well, I (work) there for 6 years because they (pay) me a very good salary. I (need) the money at that time as I was building a house. I (leave) Intercom as soon as I (can) afford it.

5. Open the brackets, using the Past Simple or Present Perfect Tense.

- 1) I (buy) this car in 2002. You see I (have) it for more than 9 years. It's time I bought a new one.
- 2) How long they (be) married? –Oh, I remember, they (get) married in 1991. 10 years (pass)!
- 3) Why are you crying? He (not call) yet? So what? He only (leave) the day before yesterday.
- 4) I (be) up to my eyes in work recently. Yesterday my boss (say) we (can) have a full weekend. Believe it or not – that (be) my first weekend since last month!
- 5) When Mary (start) her course in Germany? – She (go) there in September. I know that the course (be) over in May, but she (not return) yet.
- 6) He (work) for a big trading company for 15 years and (make) a great career, but last year everything (change) for the worse: their company (be) taken over and he (lose) his job. He (fail) to find a new job. In fact, he (be) unemployed for 10 months.
- 7) I (not see) Nick in the morning. – That's weird. I just (see) him. – Where you (see) him?
- 8) Muslims (begin) to immigrate to Great Britain in the 1960s. They (keep) their traditions so far.
- 9) What (happen)? Just tell me who (break) the window. How it (happen)? Why you (not call) me?
- 10) He (be) my close friend since we (meet) at University. We (have) a lot in common and (become) friends straightaway. He (move) to Sweden after the 2nd year and I (not see) much of him lately.

6. Write these questions in full, using the tips. Replace 'he' or 'she' by real people to ask a partner.

- How many times/you/be/art exhibitions/over the last 3 years?
- When/you/last/attend/a lecture?
- Why/you/not ring/her/up?
- How/your meal/was?
- You/enjoy/holiday?
- This/be/the first time/son/not warn/you/he isn't coming to dinner?
- How long/your brother/have/his motorbike?
- Long time no see! How/your life/change/since we/meet/at the previous training?
- Will you tell me about an interesting book/you/read/recently? Anything special/be/about it?
- Who/call/you/in the morning?
- Anybody/phone/today?
- How long ago/she/graduate/from university? What kind of degree/she/get?
- How many films/she/star/so far?
- Do you know/why/he/be/so anxious? You/ever/see/him/so worried?
- Excuse me, you/say/something?

7. Open the brackets, using the Present Perfect or Past Simple. Role-play similar dialogues in class.

- So, you just (come) back from Great Britain, right? How you holiday (be)?
- In fact, I (return) a week ago, but then I (have) too many things to do at work and at home. I nearly (forget) being on holiday! It (be) an amazing holiday, a holiday with a difference because we (travel) on a narrow boat.
- What it (be) like?
- The boat (have) everything: a bedroom and a small kitchen, so we (sleep) and (eat) on it, we (not have) to stay in a hotel or B&B. We (travel) on the canals and (see) a lot of wonderful places.
- You (go) to London?
- No, we You know, we (be) to so many touristy places around the world. This time we just (want) to spend a holiday in the countryside.
- There (be) any bad experiences?
- No, there..... . We only (stop) to fuel the boat and buy some food. Actually, we (spend) most of the time boating. We'd never done that before. This (be) the first time we (plan) our day ourselves, I mean we (not depend) on breakfast time in a hotel, sightseeing buses, check-in or check-out. We (feel) free. Personally I never (be) so happy in all my life.
- You (meet) any interesting people during your trip?
- We (talk) to some people, but we (not feel) like making friends with them. I meet so many people in my job! For example, this week I already (have) 12 meetings. I sometimes need to be on my own.