

11 The present perfect simple

The present perfect simple is used to talk about events in the recent past that still have an effect on the present moment. It is formed with “have” and a past participle.

See also:

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11.1 PRESENT PERFECT

The present perfect can be used to talk about the past in a number of different ways:

To give new information or news.

Hi! I have arrived in London!
My plane landed five minutes ago.



To talk about a repeated action that continues to happen over a period of time.

I have visited California every summer since I was 18.



To talk about an event that started in the past and is still happening now.

Olivia has gone on a trip to Egypt.



FURTHER EXAMPLES THE PRESENT PERFECT

Look! **I've cooked** dinner for us.



You haven't cleared the table.
It's a mess!



John has just washed the dishes.



Have you cleaned up your bedroom?



HOW TO FORM



“Has” is used for
“he,” “she,” and “it.”

11.2 REGULAR PAST PARTICIPLES

Regular past participles are formed by adding “-ed” to the base form.

ask	→	asked
call	→	called
help	→	helped
need	→	needed
play	→	played
talk	→	talked
walk	→	walked
want	→	wanted
watch	→	watched
work	→	worked

11.3 IRREGULAR PAST PARTICIPLES

English has a lot of irregular past participles, which sometimes look very different from the base form.

be	→	been
buy	→	bought
come	→	come
do	→	done
have	→	had
give	→	given
go	→	gone
make	→	made
say	→	said
see	→	seen

! COMMON MISTAKES PAST SIMPLE FORMS AND PAST PARTICIPLES

It is important not to mix up past simple forms with past participles.

I have seen lots of great things here. ✓

This is the past participle of “see.”

I have saw lots of great things here. ✗

This is the past simple form of “see,” and shouldn’t be used in perfect tenses.

11.4 "GONE / BEEN"

"Be" and "go" are both used in the present perfect to talk about going somewhere, but they have different meanings.



I haven't seen Joan recently. Where is she?

She's gone to Florida.

She is still in Florida.



Hi, Joan. You're looking well.



Yes, I've been to Florida.

She went to Florida, but now she is back home.



FURTHER EXAMPLES



Where's Ben?



He's gone to the mall.

You look relaxed.



Yes, we've been in Bermuda. We had a great time.



Where's Ariana?



She's gone windsurfing.

Your hair looks great!



Thanks! I've just been to the hair salon.



Where are Julie and Jack?



They've gone to see a play.

Where have you been?



We've been to visit Joan in the hospital. She's not very well.

11.5 THE PRESENT PERFECT SIMPLE AND THE PAST SIMPLE

The past simple is used to talk about something that happened at a definite time. The present perfect is used when a particular time is not specified.

A specific date, 2010, is given, so the past simple is used.

Have you ever been to France?

Yes, I visited Paris in 2010.



2010



NOW

There's no specific date, so the present perfect is used.

Yes, I have visited Paris many times.



2003

2008

2010

2014

NOW

FURTHER EXAMPLES

PAST SIMPLE

I saw a great movie last week.



Jo didn't climb Mount Fuji last year.



Madison ate too much last night.



PRESENT PERFECT

I haven't seen that movie.



Saki has climbed Mount Fuji twice.



Jack hasn't eaten curry before.



11.6 THE PRESENT PERFECT IN US ENGLISH

US English often uses the past simple when UK English would use the present perfect.



No dessert for me! I ate too much. (US)

No dessert for me! I've eaten too much. (UK)



I can't find my passport. Did you see it? (US)

I can't find my passport. Have you seen it? (UK)