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B1.U2

PRESENT PERFECT & PAST



The present perfect simple is **have/has + past participle**. The past participle often ends in -ed (finished/decided etc.), but many important verbs are irregular (lost/done/written etc.).

When we say that something ‘has happened’, this is usually a new information:

Ow! I’ve cut my finger.

(from the news) Police have arrested two men in connection with the robbery.

When we use the present perfect, there is a connection with now. The action in the past has a result now:

‘Where is your key?’ ‘I don’t know. I’ve lost it.’
‘I can’t find my bag. Have you seen it?’



You can use the present perfect with **just, already and yet.**

Just = a short time ago.

'Are you hungry?' 'No, I've just had lunch'.

Already = something happened sooner than expected.

'Don't forget to send the letter.' 'I've already sent it'.

Yet = until now. Yet shows that speaker is expecting something to happen. Use yet only in questions and negative sentences.

Has it stopped raining yet?



Note the difference between **gone (to)** and **been (to)**:

Jim is on holiday. He ***has gone to*** Italy. (= he is there now or on his way to.)

Jane is back home now. She ***has been to*** Italy. (= she has now come back)



When we talk about a period of time that continues from the past until now, we use the present perfect (have been/have travelled etc.)

Have you ever **eaten** caviar? (in your life)

We've never **had** a car.

We use the present perfect with today / this evening / this year etc. when these periods are not finished at the time of speaking.

I've drunk four cups of coffee **today**.

Have you **had** a holiday **this year** (yet)?



We say: It's the (first) time something has happened.

*Don is having a driving lesson. This is the first time he **has driven** a car.*

*Sarah has lost her passport. This is the second time this **has happened**.*

*Bill is phoning his girlfriend. That's the third time he's **phoned** her this evening.*



We use the present perfect continuous for an activity that has recently stopped or just stopped. There is a connection with now:

You are out of breath. **Have** you **been running**?
Plus is very tired. He's **been working** very hard.

You can use the present perfect continuous for actions repeated over a period of time:

Debbie is a good tennis player. She's **been playing** since she was eight.

Every morning they meet in the same cafe. They've **been going** there for three years.



Present Perfect Continuous: We are interested in the activity. It does not matter whether something has finished or not.

My hands are very dirty. **I've been repairing** the car.

John **has been eating** too much recently. He should eat less.

Present Perfect Simple: Here the important thing is that something has been finished. We are interested in the result of the activity, not the activity itself.

The car is OK again now. **I've repaired** it.

Have you ever **played** tennis?



We use the continuous to say how long (for an activity that is still happening):

How long **have** you **been reading** that book?

Lisa is still writing letters. She **has been writing** letters whole day.

We use the simple to say how much, how many or how many times (for completed actions):

How much of that book **have** you **read**?

Lisa **has written** ten letters today.

Some verbs (for example know/like/belive) are not normally used in the continuous.

I've known about it for a long time.

NOTE: You can use want and mean in the present perfect continuous:
I've been meaning to phone Jane, but I keep forgetting.



We use the present perfect to talk about something that has began in the past and still continues now.

Compare the present and the present perfect:

Bill is in hospital. *but* He **has been** in hospital since Monday.

Do you know each other well? *but* **Have** you **known** each other for a long time?

You can use either the present perfect continuous or simple with live and work:

Julia **has been living / has lived** in Paris for a long time.

How long **have** you **been working/ have worked** here?



We use **for** and **since** to say how long something has been happening:

We use **for** + a period of time (two hours/six weeks etc.)
I've been waiting **for** two hours.

We use **since** + the start of the period (8 o'clock, Monday, 1999 etc.)
I've been waiting **since** 8 o'clock.

It's possible to leave out **for** (but not usually in negative sentences):

They have been married (for) **ten** years. (with or without for)
They haven't had a holiday **for ten** years. (you must use for)

We don't use for + all (all day/all week etc.)



Compare ***when....?*** (+ past simple) and ***how long...?*** (+present perfect):

A: When did it start raining?

B: It started raining an hour ago / at 1 o'clock.

A: How long has it been raining?

B: It's been raining for an hour / since 1 o'clock.

We say 'It's (a long time/two years etc.) ***since*** something happened:

It's two years since I last saw Joe. (=I haven't seen Joe for two years)

It's ages since we went to the cinema. (=We haven't been to the cinema for ages)

You can ask '**How long is it since.....?**'

How long is it since you last saw Joe? (= When did you last see Joe?)

How long is it since you last saw Joe? (= When did you last see Joe?)



The present perfect always tells us about the situation now.
The past simple tells us only about the past.

Don't use use the present perfect if the situation now is different. Compare:

They've **gone away**. They will be back on Friday. (they are away now)
They **went** away, but I think they are back at home now. help.

You can use the present perfect for new or recent happenings:
'I've **repaired** the TV set. It's working OK now.'
'**Have** you **heard** the news? Sally **has won** the lottery.'

We use the present perfect to give new information. But if we continue to talk about it, we normally use the past simple.

A: "Ow, I've **burnt** myself."

B: "Hod **did** you **do** that?"

A: "I **picked** up a hot dish."



Don't use use the present perfect when you talk about a finished time (for example, *yesterday* / *ten minutes ago* / *in 1999* / *when I was a child*). Use a past tense:

It **was** very cold *yesterday*.

Paul and Lucy **arrived** *ten minutes ago*.

Use the past to ask *When....?* or *What time....?*

“When **did** your friends **arrive**?”

“What time **did** your **finish** work?”



The past perfect simple is had + past participle (gone / seen / finished etc).

Sometimes we talk about something that happened in the past:
Sarah **arrived** at the party.

This is the starting point of the story. Then, if we want to talk about things that happened **before** this time, we use the past perfect (**I had...**)

When Sarah **arrived** at the party, Paul **had** already **gone** home.

Compare *the past simple* (left, was etc.) and *the past perfect* (had left, had been etc.):

A: Was Tom there when you arrived?

B: Yes, but he left soon afterwards.

A: Was Tom there when you arrived?

B: No, he had already left.



You can say that something had been happening for a period of time before something else happened:

We'd **been playing** tennis for about half an hour when it started to rain heavily.

Compare *have been -ing* (Present Perfect Continuous) and *had been -ing* (Past Perfect Continuous):

I hope the bus will come soon, **I've been waiting** for 20 minutes. (before now)
At last the bus came. **I'd been waiting** for 20 minutes. (before the bus came)

Compare *was -ing* (Past Continuous) and *had been -ing* (Past Perfect Continuous):

It **wasn't raining** when we went out. The sun **was shining**. But it **had been raining** so the ground was wet.

Cathy **was sitting** in an armchair resting. She was tired because she **had been working** very hard.



CLASS ACTIVITIES & EXERCISES

