

B Grammar

1 Present perfect simple or past simple?

Present perfect simple

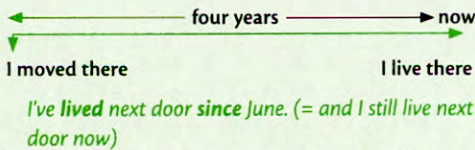
+	has/have + past participle	<i>I've written it.</i>
-	has/have not + past participle	<i>She hasn't written it.</i>
?	has/have ... + past participle?	<i>Have you written it?</i>

Some verbs are irregular: *break* → *broken*; *go* → *gone* (> See Web page: Irregular verbs.)

> For past simple forms, see Unit 2, B1.

We use the present perfect simple:

- with *since* or *for*, about a period of time which continues up to the present moment:
I've lived there for four years. (= and I still live there)



- with questions asking *how long*:
How long have you lived here? (= I know you still live here)
Sometimes we can also use the present perfect continuous. > See B2

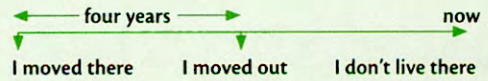
- in the negative, for unfinished actions and events, often with *still* or *yet*:
I still haven't sent the email.
I haven't sent the email yet.
- Still* and *yet* are always used with a negative in the present perfect. *Still* goes before the verb; *yet* goes after it.

- for events repeated over a period of time until the present (they may continue):
You've played the saxophone every night. (= until now, and you will probably continue to play every night)

- for events which happened in the past at a time which is unknown and/or irrelevant:
I've started my essay. (= we don't know when)
I've lost my new camera. (= it's not important when or where)

We use the past simple:

- with *for*, about a period of time which is finished:
I lived there for four years. (= but I don't live there now)



- with questions asking *when*:
When did you move here? (= the move is in the past)

- for completed actions and events in the past, often with *ago*:
I sent the email half an hour ago.

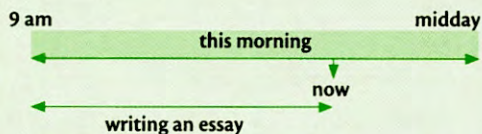
- for events repeated over a period of time in the past (they are now finished):
You played the saxophone every night. (= but you don't any more)

3 Present perfect and past simple

We use the present perfect simple:

- for events that happened in the recent past (often with just):
*Flight 206 **has landed**.* (= in the last few minutes)
*She's **just gone** to the cinema.* (= she's on her way or she's already there now)

- when the time stated is not finished:
*I've **spent** this morning writing an essay.* (= it's still morning)



*The builders **have started** working on the kitchen this week.* (= it's still this week)

- when we talk about a period of time up to the present:
*I've **been** to Los Angeles but not to New York.* (= in my life up to now)
*The team **has won** several matches.* (= and may win more)

- when we talk about how many times something has happened up to now:
*Alex **has phoned** Ella three times.* (= and he might phone her again)

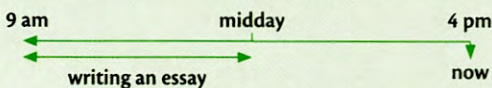
- with adverbs like *already*, *before*, *ever* and *never*:
*Nobody's **ever complained** before.* (= until now)
*I've **never tried** Japanese food.* (= but I might one day)
*She's **already gone** to the airport.*
*I've **met** her **before** somewhere.*
Never, ever and already go between the auxiliary and the main verb. Before goes after the verb.

- after a superlative (> see Unit 7):
*It's the **best** cup of coffee I've **had** here.*
*This is the **most exciting** place we've **been** to.*

We use the past simple:

- for events that happened at a particular time in the past:
*Flight 206 **landed** at one o'clock.*
 or within a period of time in the past:
*She **was** at the cinema between midday and two o'clock.* (= but she's not there now)

- when the time stated is finished:
*I **spent** this morning writing an essay.* (= it's now afternoon so 'this morning' is in the past)



*I **started** my essay last week.* (= 'last week' is definitely in the past)

*I **lost** my new camera in London.* (= the place fixes it at a time in the past)

- when we talk about past events which are not connected to the present:
*I **went** to Los Angeles but not to New York.* (= on a particular trip which is in the past)
*The Chinese **invented** printing.*

- when we talk about how many times something happened in the past:
*Alex **phoned** Ella three times yesterday.*

2 Present perfect simple or continuous?

Present perfect continuous

+	has/have been + verb + -ing	<i>I've been working hard.</i>
-	has/have not been + verb + -ing	<i>She hasn't been working hard.</i>
?	has/have ... + been + verb + -ing?	<i>Have you been working hard?</i>

The present perfect and the present perfect continuous are both used to describe events or activities which started in the past and have continued up to the present, or activities which stopped recently. Some verbs can be used in either the present perfect simple or continuous with little difference in meaning. These are verbs which describe activities which normally happen over a period of time, e.g. *live, study, wait, work*:

Martin has lived / has been living in Japan for five years.

We use the present perfect continuous:

- to talk about how long something has been happening:
I've been driving since five o'clock this morning.
The children have been playing happily all morning.
We've been worrying about her all week.
How long have you been watching TV?
- to focus on the activity or event itself (whether it is complete or not is unimportant):
He's been reading that book since he got up.
(= we're interested in how he passed the time)
I've been mending the car. (= that's why I'm dirty)

We use the present perfect simple:

- to talk about how often or how many times something has happened:
I've driven there several times before.
The children have played four games of tennis this morning.
I've worried about her every day since she set off.
I've watched three programmes.
- to focus on the present result of an activity or event which is complete:
I've read the newspapers. (= I've finished reading them)
I've mended the car. (= I've finished so we can go out in it now)

⚠ We never use the present tense to talk about how long we have been doing something:

I've been learning the piano for a long time. (not *I'm learning the piano for a long time*)

He's been playing in a band for two years. (not *He's playing in a band for two years*)

⚠ State verbs are not usually used in the present perfect continuous (> see Unit 1, B3):

I've known her since she was four years old. (not *I've been knowing her*)

I've always hated cold weather. (not *I've always been hating cold weather*)

C Grammar exercises

1 Match the beginnings and endings of these sentences.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1 He's talked to her on the phone | A for years. |
| 2 This summer the pool was only open | B on my way home from school yesterday. |
| 3 The whole team felt exhausted | C since nine o'clock this morning. |
| 4 The rent of my flat has gone up | D when the match finished. |
| 5 She's had nothing to eat | E ever since she was very young. |
| 6 I got very wet | F by 20 per cent this year. |
| 7 I spent a month in Brazil | G a few minutes ago. |
| 8 She's always enjoyed painting | H from April till September. |
| 9 I haven't had such a good time | I in 2002. |
| 10 This text arrived | J every night this week. |

2 Fill in the gaps with the present perfect or past simple form of the verbs.

- This is only the second time I 've ever flown (ever fly) in an aeroplane.
- The child _____ (sleep) from seven till seven without waking once.
- Gabriella _____ (grow) five centimetres since last month.
- I _____ (send) Ed three emails last week but he _____ (not reply) to any of them yet.
- _____ (you / learn) to play chess when you were a child?
- I _____ (buy) this bicycle five years ago and I _____ (use) it every day since then.
- How long _____ (you / have) that bad cough?
- The train _____ (just arrive), so hurry and you might catch it.
- I _____ (never see) such a beautiful rainbow before.
- I _____ (dream) about a beautiful desert island last night.
- On Sunday we _____ (meet) outside the cinema as usual.
- When _____ (you / get) that jacket? I _____ (not notice) it before.

3 Choose the correct verb forms in these sentences by Cambridge First candidates.


- I think that my friend Andrew *has worked* / *has been working* too hard recently and needs a rest.
- I *have been working* / *worked* with children when I was at university.
- How many times *have you eaten* / *have you been eating* Japanese food?
- Since I left school in the summer I *have been doing* / *have done* a holiday job.
- Two years ago I *did* / *have done* a course in coaching basketball.
- I am so happy to receive your invitation. I *have waited* / *have been waiting* for it for ages!

4 Fill in the gaps with suitable verbs in the present perfect or the past simple.

Hi from Richard in Spain

I (1) 've been here in Spain for two weeks now and I'm having a great time. When I (2) _____ at the airport I (3) _____ very lonely. But I (4) _____ (*already*) some friends and I'm staying with a very nice family. They (5) _____ me to the seaside last weekend and we (6) _____ in the sea. I really (7) _____ it. I (8) _____ some Spanish but I (9) _____ (*not*) to any language classes yet – they start next week. It's now midnight and I need to go to bed as I (10) _____ a very busy day. I (11) _____ shopping this morning and I (12) _____ football this afternoon.

See you in a month!


5 Read this conversation between two people in a sports club. Choose the correct verb forms.

Anna: Excuse me. (1) *We've waited* / *We've been waiting* to play tennis since 10.30. It must be our turn now.

Tim: I don't think so.

Anna: (2) *We've stood* / *We've been standing* here patiently watching you and it's time for you to stop. How long (3) *have you played* / *have you been playing*?

Tim: Since about 9.30. (4) *We've played* / *We've been playing* two matches so far this morning and (5) *we haven't finished* / *we haven't been finishing* the third yet. You'll have to wait or do something else.

Anna: But (6) *you've played* / *you've been playing* for more than two hours and it's our turn now.

Tim: I said you'll have to wait.

Anna: We're tired of waiting and we haven't got anything to do. (7) *We've read* / *We've been reading* the magazines we brought with us.

Tim: Why don't you do something else? (8) *Have you tried* / *Have you been trying* the swimming pool?

Anna: We don't want to swim, we want to play tennis.

Tim: Well, I always play on a Saturday morning. Anyway, (9) *we've already started* / *we've already been starting* the third match.

Anna: Oh well, it looks like we've got no choice, but (10) *we've booked* / *we've been booking* for next Saturday so you'll be unlucky then.