

Past Simple vs. Present Perfect

GRAMMAR

LEVEL Intermediate NUMBER B1_1035G_EN

LANGUAGE English



- Learn the differences between the past simple and the present perfect
- Practise talking about the past
- Review regular and irregular verbs



Have you ever got confused about English **tenses**? More than once, probably!

This lesson will help untangle the **past simple** from the **present perfect**.

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Preview and warm-up

In this lesson you are going to learn about the differences between the past simple and the present perfect and you will talk about your past experiences.



I have always been on time for work.



■ We use the **past simple** to talk about **when something happened**.

■ We often use words and phrases such as *last week*, *ago*, *in 2009*, and *at 4pm*.

Question	Positive	Negative	
Did she go to London last week?	She went to London last week.	She didn't go to London last week.	
Did you meet with our clients in England?	l met with our clients in England.	l didn't meet with our clients in England.	
Did you attend the meeting last week?	l attended the meeting last week.	l didn't attend the meeting last week.	



The present perfect

We use the **present perfect** to talk about **experiences** in our **life up to now**, but we don't say exactly when they happened.

In this context we often use the words: *never* and *ever*, *yet*, *already*, and *so far*.

Question	Positive	Negative	
Have you ever been to a trade fair?	I have been to a trade fair.	l have never been to a trade fair.	
Have you been happy with my work so far?	l've been happy with your work so far.	l haven't been happy with your work so far.	
Have they finished the project yet?	They have already finished the project.	hed They haven't finished the project yet.	

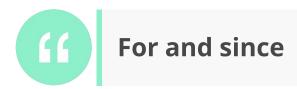


Past simple and present perfect

When someone asks a question in the present perfect, we can answer in the present perfect or the past simple.

It depends if you want to give more information or not.

Question	Answer	
Have you ever been to Rome?	Yes, I have.	
Have you ever been to Rome?	Yes, I went in 2015.	
Has she met your parents yet?	Yes, she has.	
Has she met your parents yet?	Yes, she met them last weekend.	



We often use the words *for* and *since* in the **present perfect**. We can also use *for* with the **past simple**. You need to be careful how you use them.

- **For** tells us **how long** an action goes on
- Since tells us when an action started

For	Since
For 20 years	Since 1997
For a long time	Since I can remember
For ages	Since she was young
For all his life	Since he was born





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Been and gone

We use *been* to say we went somewhere and came back.

We use *gone* to say we went somewhere but haven't returned yet.



She has **gone** to China.

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Positive and negative practice: the past simple Look at the sentences below and turn them into the negative form

- 1. She went to Manchester last week.
- 2. I met with our clients a few days ago.
- 3. I bought a new iPad last year.
- 4. I attended the meeting last week.

5. I walked to work yesterday.

She didn't go to Manchester last week.





Positive and negative practice: present perfect Look at the sentences below and turn them into the negative form

- 1. I have been to London.
- 2. I have worked as a freelancer before.
- 3. I have already met with our clients.
- 4. The director has decided to relocate the company.
- 5. She has finished her task.

l haven't been to London.



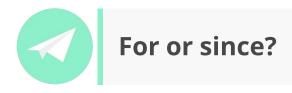


Find the mistakes

Five of these sentences have mistakes with the present perfect or past simple in them. Can you find them?

- 1. Have you been to the trade fair last month?
- 2. I spoke to Tim yesterday.
- 3. She has been at this company for a long time.
- 4. The company didn't update its software since 2009.
- 5. Yuri has worked for an advertising agency when he was at university.
- 6. Have you ever been to Jordan?
- 7. I never met him but I hope I will one day.
- 8. I like your suit. How long did you have it for?







I haven't been to work ages.

She hasn't spoken to me _____ we left school.

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Fill in the gaps with the words below and then answer the questions. You can answer with present perfect or past simple.

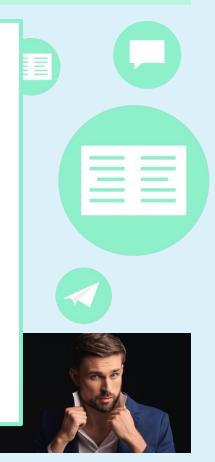
 Have you ever on a business trip? Have you ever in the office? Have you ever experience working as an engineer? Have you ever English with an Australian person? 	s	poken	had	been	smoked	
 trip? 2. Have you ever in the office? 3. Have you ever experience working as an engineer? 4. Have you ever English with 						
 3. Have you ever experience working as an engineer? 4. Have you ever English with 	1.		ou ever	on a b	ousiness	
working as an engineer?4. Have you ever English with	2.	Have yo	ou ever	in the	office?	
	3.				ience	
	4.				h with	



Choose the verbs

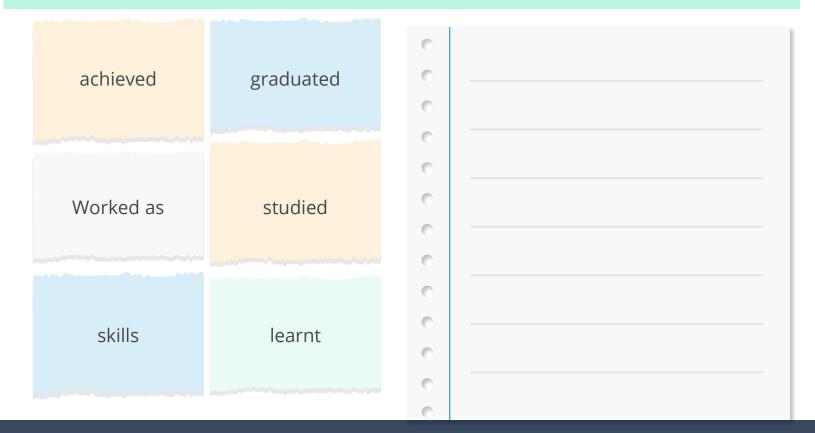
Read about Peter's life. Choose the correct verbs.

Peter **was/has been** born in Los Angeles, California. He **was/has been** a model all his life. He **starred/has starred** in his first photo shoot when he **was/has been** 2 months old. John **published/has published** two books of his photographs and he wants to publish another one. So far, he **earned/has earned** over \$12 million in his career – last year he **made/has made** more than \$2 million.



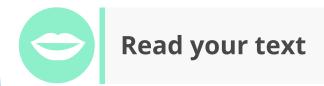


Using the previous page to help you, write a short text about your academic and professional life up to now. You may wish to include some of the suggested words below.



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Read your text aloud. Have you used the correct tenses? Do they have any questions?



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The present perfect

We also use the **present perfect** for something which happened very **recently**.
The word we often hear with this is *just*.

I have just had lunch – I'm so full.

She has just called me to say she'll be late.

He has just left – you can probably catch him.

She has just come out of the interview and said it went well.





Action or result?

Sometimes we use the **present perfect** to focus on the **result** of the action.
 We use the **past simple** to focus simply on the **action**.

Action	Result
l bought a new car.	l have just bought a new car – look!
He finished shooting the film.	He has finished shooting the film – now we can watch it.
What did you do today? Tell me.	What have you done today? Show me.



The present perfect

We use the present perfect simple to say how many times we have done something.

- I have been to Paris **three times**.
- I have only ever received a complaint once.
- I've been to hundreds of conferences.



Read through the dialogue. Notice which actions have present results.



Hi Tom. I telephoned you yesterday morning about the report but you didn't pick up. How come?



Sorry Fran, I was in a meeting. Unfortunately I've been very busy recently so I haven't finished my section of the report yet, but I've made good progress on the introduction.



That's alright. Have you managed to chase up our clients that haven't paid us yet?



I've arranged to meet with them next week to discuss the matter.



What is the difference between these pairs of sentences? What might come after the sentence, or how would someone reply?

- Someone has opened the window./Someone opened the window.
- 2. George has broken his leg./George broke his leg before the match.
- 3. I have lost my keys!/I lost my keys yesterday.
- 4. I have made a cake./I made a cake.
- 5. I have bought a new computer./I bought a new computer.





Fill in the gaps with *just* and an appropriate verb.

- 1. Are you hungry? No, I've ______ lunch.
- 2. Have you been at work today? Yes, I've _____ back.
- Where are you going? Mike has
 _____ a new car I'm going for a ride.
 - 4. I heard you are doing a typing course can you help with this? I've ______ so I'm not very good yet, sorry.





What have they just done?

What do you think the people in the pictures have just done? Can you imagine what they're saying?





What have you just done?



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Complete the sentences

Complete these sentences with your own ideas.

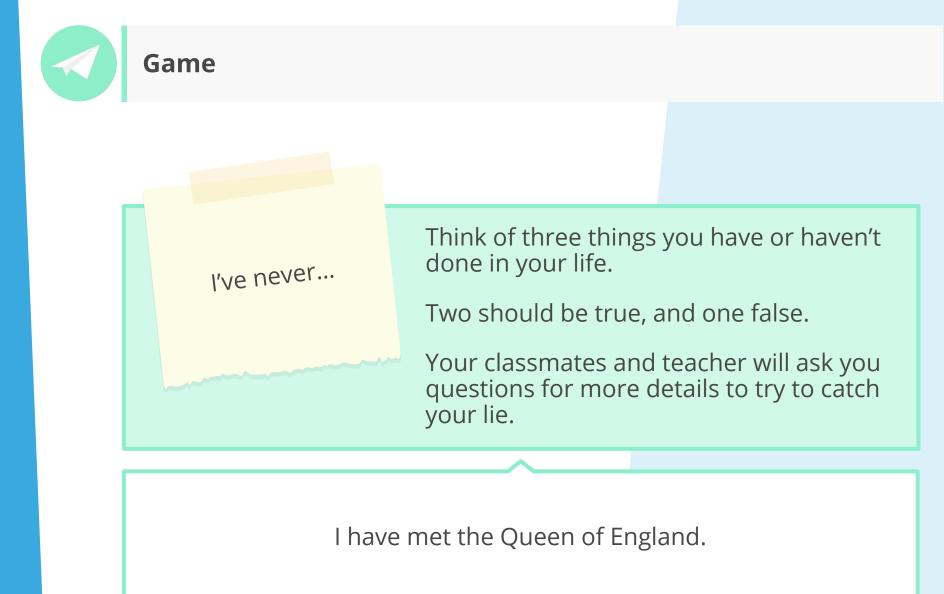
1. I have never...

2. I have ______ once in my life.

3. I have ______ three or four times in my life.

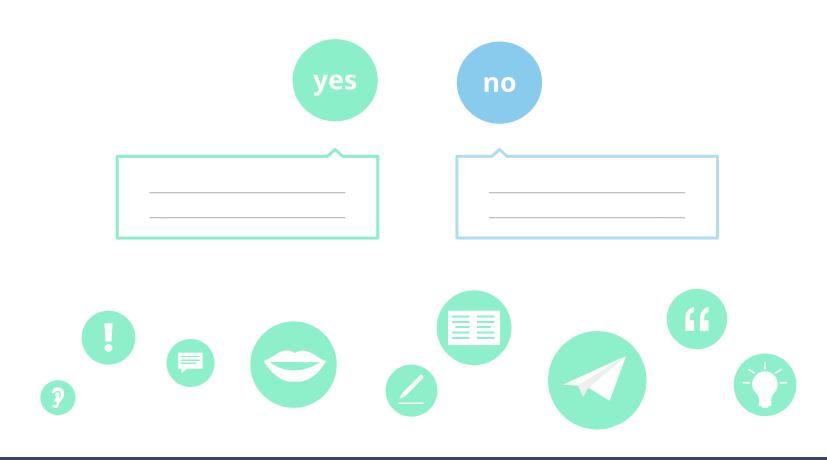
4. I have _____ many times.

5. I have ______ more times than I can remember!





Go back to the second slide of the lesson and check if you have achieved all the goals of the lesson.



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Reflect on this lesson

Think about everything you have seen in this lesson. What were the most difficult activities or words? The easiest?



Exercise p. 10

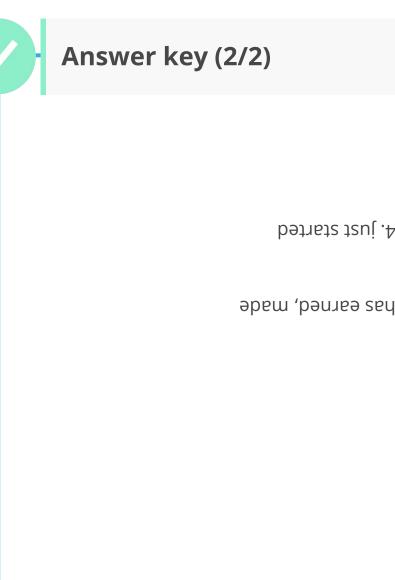
She didn't go to Manchester last week., 2. I didn't meet with our clients a few weeks. ago., 3. I didn't buy a new iPad last year., 4. I didn't attend the meeting last week., 5. I didn't walk to work yesterday.

Exercise p. 11

l haven't been to London., I've never worked as a freelancer before., I haven't met with our clients yet., The director has not decided to relocate our company yet., She

Exercise p. 12

-, 7. I have never, 8. How long have you had it for?



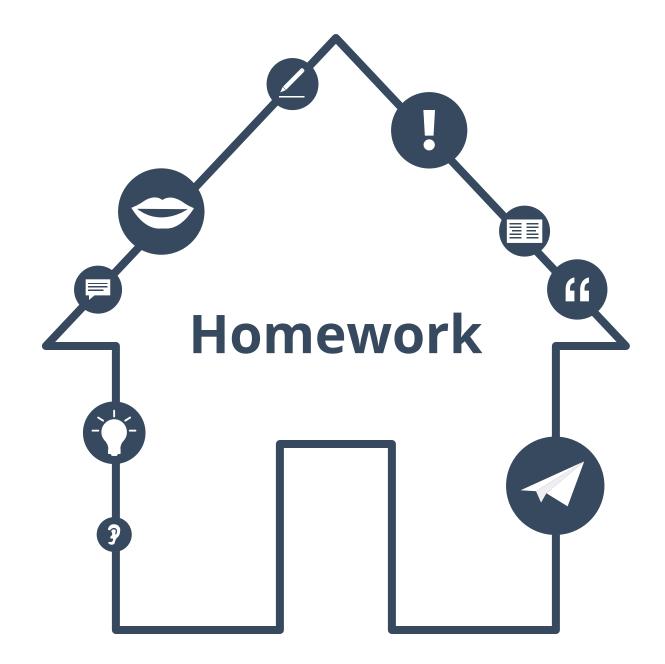
Exercise p. 23

Exercise p. 15 was, has been, starred, was, has published, has earned, made

1. been, 2. smoked, 3. had, 4. spoken

Exercise p. 14

Exercise p. 13 Since, for, for, since

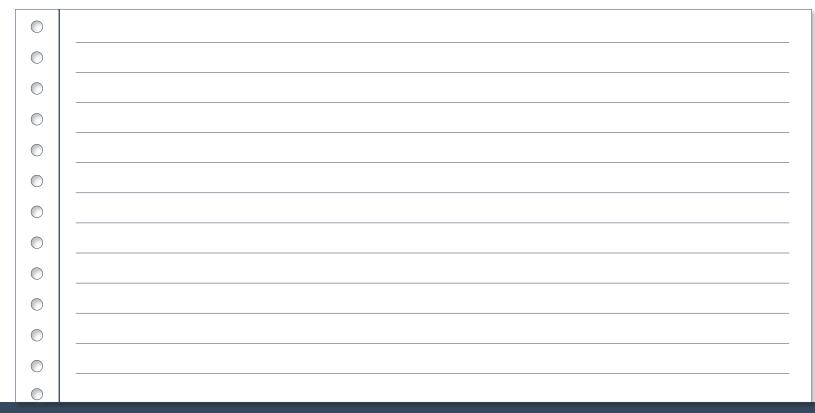


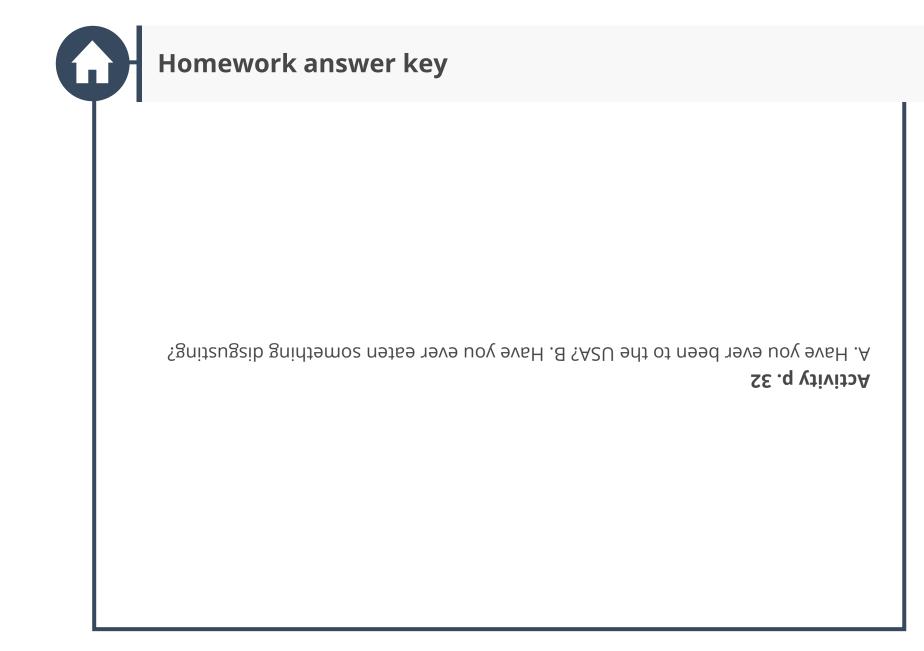
Unscramble the questions A ever to you





Write your answers to the questions on the previous page. Give as much detail as possible.







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