

English Grammar: Present Perfect Simple

This verb tense can be a problem for Brazilians because it's used much less in Portuguese than in English.

The structure is: **has/have + past participle (3rd form)**

Examples: **has been** **have been**
 has gone **have gone**
 has eaten **have eaten**
 has visited **have visited**

Present Perfect is a “past” tense, so why is it called “Present Perfect”?

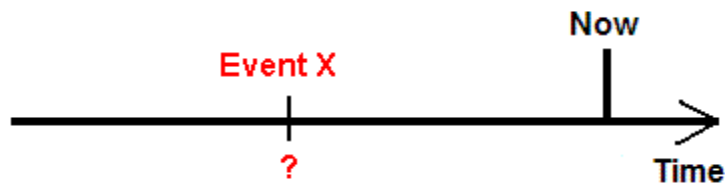
Simply because there is a link to the present.

Do we really need to use the *Present Perfect* tense?

To speak English correctly, we need to use the Present Perfect tense in many situations. However, the Americans frequently use the ***Past Simple*** instead of the ***Present Perfect***.

So in which situations do we use the *Present Perfect*?

1) An event (or events) in the past (time not important).



Examples:

Have you ever eaten lobster? Yes, I **have**. / No, I **haven't**.

I **have visited** the pyramids in Egypt.

He **has done** his homework.

Have you seen John recently? Yes, I **have**. / No, I **haven't**.

Man **has landed** on the moon.

Note that the event is important, not the time/date.

2) An event which started in the past and continues until now.

It is common to use 'for' (a period of time) or 'since' (a specific time) in this situation.



Examples: She **has lived** in Canada **since** 1997.
I **have worked** here **for** 2 years.
We **have been** in London **for** 18 months.
They **have been** married **for** 20 years.
We **have studied** English **since** 2016.
He **has been** sick **since** Tuesday.
I **have had** a dog **for** ten years.
A: How long **have** you **lived** in Curitiba?
B: **Since** 2011. / **For** ten years.

If we use the **Past Simple**, the meaning is different – the event is finished.

She **lived** in Canada when she was young. (*but not now*)

I **worked** for the government for 5 years. (*but not now*)

They **were** married for 20 years. (*Now they are separated*)

More examples: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vY32zcO6HsE>

If we want to specify when an event happened, we must use the *Past Simple*.

Examples:

I **visited** the pyramids in Egypt **last year**.

He **did** his homework **two hours ago**.

Did you **see** John **yesterday**?

Man **landed** on the moon **in 1969**.

Time Phrases

Past Simple (specific time references):

- yesterday
- last week
- when I was young
- at the start of the century
- three weeks ago
- 100 years ago
- over 100 years ago
- this morning
- at eleven o'clock
- in the 19th century
- the last time I saw you
- when I worked in California

Present Perfect (past event – no specific time)

- ever
- never
- once
- many times
- before
- just
- already
- yet / not yet
- in the past

Present Perfect (period until now)

- for two hours
- for ten years
- for a long time
- for ages
- for two months
- for about three weeks

- since yesterday
- since 1980
- since 9am
- since last Saturday
- since ten years ago
- since I was a child
- since I came to England

Suggested video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZ0cdZG1Pfl>