

English Grammar: Present Perfect Simple

When we talk about past events using the words “ever”, “never”, “once”, “many times”, “before”, “so far”, “just”, “already”, “yet”, and “still”, we must use the Present Perfect tense.

Examples:

- John has **already** arrived. -> recently
- Is that all you've done **so far**? -> until now
- I have seen that movie **once**. -> one time in the past
- Have you had lunch **yet**? -> will it happen soon?
- I haven't eaten anything **yet!** -> it will happen soon
- Have you **ever** seen a ghost? -> at least one time in your life
- We have **never** visited Europe. -> it never happened
- I have seen that film **many times**. -> many times in the past
- I've not noticed that **before**. -> before now
- He has **just** arrived. -> very recently (typically minutes)
- I **still** haven't decided where to go in my vacation. -> it should have happened already, but it will happen soon

Note that the Present Perfect can also be used to refer to an unspecified time within an unfinished time period, e.g. “today”, “this year”. For example, “last year” and “this year” are treated very differently. “Last year” is a period of time which is finished and therefore requires the Past Simple. However, “this year” refers to a period of time which is unfinished, and so it requires the Present Perfect.

Examples:

- I have been to Mexico this year.
- What have you done today?
- I have visited 6 different countries this month.

Suggested video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5OqD-89xZpw>

Adverb Placement

Adverbs such as “always”, “sometimes”, “only”, “never”, “ever”, “still” and “just” always split the form. However, the adverb “yet” always appears at the end of the sentence.

Examples:

- I **have** *only* **seen** that movie once.
- **Have** you *ever* **eaten** sushi?
- We **have** *never* **been** to Japan.
- He **hasn't** **arrived** *yet*.

More Examples:

- I **have been** to France.
- I **have been** to France three times.
- I **have** never **been** to France.

- My English **has improved**.
- My English **has** really **improved**.
- My English **has** really **improved** since I moved to Australia.

- English **has become** a very popular language.
- I think I **have seen** that movie before.
- He **has** never **travelled** by train.
- Joan **has studied** two foreign languages.
- A: **Have** you ever **met** him? B: No, I **have** not **met** him, but I **have met** his wife.

- You **have grown** a lot since the last time I saw you.
- Man **has walked** on the Moon.
- Our son **has learned** how to read.
- Doctors **have cured** many deadly diseases.
- Scientists **have split** the atom.
- James **hasn't finished** his homework yet.
- Susan **hasn't mastered** Japanese, but she can communicate.
- Bill **has** still **not arrived**.
- The rain **hasn't stopped**.
- The army **has attacked** that city five times.
- I **have had** four tests so far this semester.
- We **have had** many major problems while working on this project.
- She **has talked** to several specialists about her problem.

Exercise 1. Complete using the Past Simple or Present Perfect Simple.

1. A: Did you like the movie "Star Wars"?

B: I don't know. I _____ (see, never) that movie.

2. Sam _____ (arrive) in San Diego a week ago.

3. My best friend and I _____ (know) each other for over fifteen years. We still get together once a week.

4. Stinson is a fantastic writer. He _____ (write) ten very creative short stories last year. One day, he'll be as famous as Hemingway.

5. I _____ (have, not) this much fun since I was a kid.

6. Things _____ (change) a lot at my company. When we _____ (start) here three years ago, the company _____ (have) only six employees. Since then, we _____ (expand) to more than 2000.

7. Listen Donna, I don't care if you _____ (miss) the bus this morning. You _____ (be) late to work many times. You're fired!

8. Sam is from Colorado, which is a long way from the coast, so he _____ (see, never) the ocean.

9. George always _____ (dream) of going to California before he died, so he _____ (see, never) the ocean.

10. Johnny, I can't believe how much you _____ (change) since the last time I _____ (see) you. You _____ (grow) at least a foot!

11. This tree _____ (be) planted by the settlers who _____ (found) our city over four hundred years ago.

12. This mountain _____ (be, never) climbed by anyone. Several mountaineers _____ (try) to reach the top, but nobody _____ (succeed, ever). The climb is extremely difficult and many people _____ (die) trying to reach the summit.

13. I _____ (visit, never) Africa, but I _____ (travel) to South America several times. The last time I _____ (go) to South America, I _____ (visit) Brazil and Peru. I _____ (spend) two weeks in the Amazon, _____ (hike) for a week near Machu Picchu, and _____ (fly) over the Nazca Lines.

Exercise 2. Complete using the Past Simple or Present Perfect Simple.

Since computers were first introduced to the public in the early 1980's, technology _____ (change) a great deal. The first computers _____ (be) simple machines designed for basic tasks. They _____ (have, not) much memory and they _____ (be, not) very powerful. Early computers were often quite expensive and customers often _____ (pay) thousands of dollars for machines which actually _____ (do) very little. Most computers _____ (be) separate, individual machines used mostly as expensive typewriters or for playing games. Times _____ (change). Computers _____ (become) powerful machines with very practical applications. Programmers _____ (create) a large selection of useful programs which do everything from teaching foreign languages to bookkeeping. We are still playing video games, but today's games _____ (become) faster, more exciting interactive adventures. Many computer users _____ (get, also) on the Internet and _____ (begin) communicating with other computer users around the world. We _____ (start) to create international communities online. In short, the simple, individual machines of the past _____ (evolve) into an international World Wide Web of knowledge.

Suggested video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vM5trdispow>