ENGLISH GRAMMAR · DEEP DIVE

Present Perfect vs Past Simple

The tense that connects the past to now: why 'I have seen him' and 'I saw him' are not the same sentence, and why 'yesterday' can never appear in the first of them.

B1 · present perfect · past simple · for / since

present perfect

The past that still matters now; it does not say when.

have / has + participle

I have lost my keys. (They are still lost.)

past simple

An event in finished time; it says or implies when.

-ed / irregular past

I lost my keys yesterday.

for / since

for + a length of time; since + a starting point.

for 3 years · since 2020

I have lived here for six years.

WORD	MEANING AND POSITION	EXAMPLE
ever / never	at any / no point in your life	Have you **ever** been to Rome?
already / just	sooner than expected / a moment ago; before the participle	She has **already** left.
yet	up to now; questions and negatives, at the end	Have you finished **yet**?
been / gone	went and came back / went and is still there	He has **gone** to the bank.

1 Present perfect or past simple?

Put the verb in brackets in the right form. Look for a finished time expression first.

1 I _____ (see) him yesterday at the station.

2 I _____ (lose) my keys, so I can't get in.

3 She _____ (arrive) two hours ago.

4 We _____ (know) each other since 2010.

5 I _____ (be) to Japan three times.

6 I _____ (go) to Paris last year.

7 I _____ (have) three coffees today.

8 He _____ (break) his leg, so he can't walk.

9 When _____ you _____ (start) this job?

10 It's the best film I _____ ever _____ (see).

2 The small words

Fill each gap with for, since, ever, never, already, yet or just.

1 I have lived here _____ six years.

2 I have worked here _____ 2019.

3 Have you _____ ridden a horse?

4 She has _____ eaten oysters and doesn't want to try them.

5 Have you finished your work _____ ?

6 She has _____ left; you missed her by a minute.

7 I don't need to buy the book; I have _____ read it.

8 We haven't heard from him _____ last summer.

3 Spot the mistake

Each sentence has one mistake. Write the correct sentence on the line.

1 I have been to London last year.

2 I am living here since 2020.

3 We have been friends since five years.

4 How long do you know Maria?

5 She has arrived an hour ago.

6 Tom isn't here; he has been to the bank.

Remember for + a length of time (for three years); since + a starting point (since 2020). And never 'have' with yesterday, last year or ago.

4 A short story

Put the verbs in brackets in the present perfect or the past simple.

My sister [1] _____ (live) in Madrid for five years now. She [2] _____ (move) there in 2020, after she [3] _____ (finish) university. She [4] _____ (visit) almost every region of Spain, and last month she [5] _____ (go) to the Canary Islands. I [6] _____ (never / be) to Spain, but she [7] _____ (just / send) me a ticket, so I'm going in June! She [8] _____ (buy) it yesterday.

5 Finished or not?

Which tense does each time expression go with? Write it in the right box.

yesterday · today · last year · this week · two hours ago · so far · in 2010 · since Monday

past simple	present perfect

Where are the answers?

The answers, with an explanation for each one, are in the LinguaBite app. Open this Deep Dive and scroll to Downloads at the bottom of the article: once you have downloaded this worksheet, its answers appear there after a couple of days, so you do the exercises first. You can choose 1, 2 or 3 days in the app's Settings.

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