The present perfect verb tense is a little difficult in English – it is used in several different ways, and there are lots of rules to remember. This lesson will teach you everything you ever wanted to know about the present perfect – try the four quizzes with grammar exercises in each section!

How to form the Present Perfect

**Present Perfect Positive**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>HAVE / HAS</th>
<th>PAST PARTICIPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I / you / we / they</td>
<td>have</td>
<td>written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he / she / it</td>
<td>has</td>
<td>written</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** In spoken English, it’s common to use the contraction:

- I’ve written three books.
- We’ve already seen that movie
- Barbara’s forgotten her cell phone.
- He’s just woken up.

In this case, **he’s, she’s, Barbara’s, etc.** mean **he has, she has**, and **Barbara has**, not **he is, she is, or Barbara is.**

**Present Perfect Negative**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>HAVEN’T / HASN’T</th>
<th>PAST PARTICIPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I / you / we / they</td>
<td>haven’t</td>
<td>seen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he / she / it</td>
<td>hasn’t</td>
<td>seen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Examples:

- I haven’t seen John this week.
- Mary hasn’t come to class for the past two days.

**Present Perfect Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HAVE / HAS</th>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>PAST PARTICIPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have</td>
<td>I / you / we / they</td>
<td>finished?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has</td>
<td>he / she / it</td>
<td>finished?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples:

- Have you finished the project yet?
- Has George ever been to New York?

**How to answer present perfect questions:**

- Have you been to London?
  
  Yes, I have. / No, I haven’t.

- Has Alex met Miriam yet?
  
  Yes, he has. / No, he hasn’t.

- Have the results of the election been announced?
  
  Yes, they have. / No, they haven’t.

**What is the past participle?**

The past participle is a form of the verb that describes a completed action or state.

For regular verbs, the past participle is the same as the simple past:

- **I worked** (simple past) all day yesterday.
- **I’ve worked** (past participle) here since August.

This is also the case for many irregular verbs:

- **He sold** (simple past) his car last week.
- **He’s sold** (past participle) 200 books so far.
However, some irregular verbs’ past participles are different from their simple past form:

- **We wrote** (simple past) an article for the newspaper.
- **We’ve written** (past participle) for many famous publications.

Many of these irregular past participles end in –n:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Simple Past</th>
<th>Past Participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>be</td>
<td>was / were</td>
<td>been</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>break</td>
<td>broke</td>
<td>broken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>choose</td>
<td>chose</td>
<td>chosen</td>
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<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>did</td>
<td>done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drive</td>
<td>drove</td>
<td>driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eat</td>
<td>ate</td>
<td>eaten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fall</td>
<td>fell</td>
<td>fallen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fly</td>
<td>flew</td>
<td>flown</td>
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<tr>
<td>forget</td>
<td>forgot</td>
<td>forgotten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>give</td>
<td>gave</td>
<td>given</td>
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<td>go</td>
<td>went</td>
<td>gone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>know</td>
<td>knew</td>
<td>known</td>
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<tr>
<td>see</td>
<td>saw</td>
<td>seen</td>
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<tr>
<td>show</td>
<td>showed</td>
<td>shown</td>
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<tr>
<td>speak</td>
<td>spoke</td>
<td>spoken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>steal</td>
<td>stole</td>
<td>stolen</td>
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<tr>
<td>take</td>
<td>took</td>
<td>taken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wear</td>
<td>wore</td>
<td>worn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>write</td>
<td>wrote</td>
<td>written</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other irregular past participles have a change in the vowel:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Simple Past</th>
<th>Past Participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>become</td>
<td>became</td>
<td>become</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>begin</td>
<td>began</td>
<td>begun</td>
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<tr>
<td>come</td>
<td>came</td>
<td>come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drink</td>
<td>drank</td>
<td>drunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ring</td>
<td>rang</td>
<td>rung</td>
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<tr>
<td>run</td>
<td>ran</td>
<td>run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sing</td>
<td>sang</td>
<td>sung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>swim</td>
<td>swam</td>
<td>swum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Present Perfect Quiz: Is each sentence grammatically correct or incorrect?

Question 1 - They already given me the money.
   a. Correct
   b. Incorrect

Question 2 - She's been to Berlin twice.
   a. Correct
   b. Incorrect

Question 3 - Gary is known Darla for a long time.
   a. Correct
   b. Incorrect

Question 4 - I haven't read today's newspaper yet.
   a. Correct
   b. Incorrect

Question 5 - Has he ever eaten Brazilian food?
   a. Correct
   b. Incorrect

Question 6 - Help, police! That man's just stolen my wallet!
   a. Correct
   b. Incorrect

Question 7 - We've recently wrote a book.
   a. Correct
   b. Incorrect

Question 8 - Laura have sold her car.
   a. Correct
   b. Incorrect

Question 9 - I haven't take the test yet.
a. Correct
b. Incorrect

**Question 10 - Has you ever met my brother?**

a. Correct
b. Incorrect

**Question 11 - I've lived in Orlando for three years.**

a. Correct
b. Incorrect

**Question 12 - No, they hasn't eaten lunch yet.**

a. Correct
b. Incorrect

**Question 13 - We haven't chosen a name for the baby yet.**

a. Correct
b. Incorrect

**Question 14 - Have you ever drived a Ferrari?**

a. Correct
b. Incorrect

**Question 15 - Have you heard the new song by Adele?**

a. Correct
b. Incorrect

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**Present Perfect with unfinished time**

**Present Perfect with ever / never**
The present perfect is used with *ever* and *never* to talk about actions done at any time in a person’s life, or at any time in history until now.

- Have you ever been to Japan?
- Has she ever seen Titanic?
- Have they ever ridden a motorcycle?
- Has Jason ever failed a test?

Use *ever* in questions only – NOT in statements.
“I’ve ever been to Japan.”

“I’ve been to Japan.”

Use never in statements – but only with have/has, not with haven’t/hasn’t:

“My sister hasn’t never seen Titanic.”

“My sister has never seen Titanic.”

“My sister hasn’t seen Titanic.”

**Present Perfect with already, yet, recently, lately, and just**

The words already, yet, recently, lately, and just all refer to a recent and non-specific time. (A specific time would be “yesterday” or “three hours ago” or last Friday,” and in these cases we would use the simple past).

**Already and yet**

**Already** can be used in positive statements and questions.

• “I’ve already read today’s newspaper.”
• “Have you already paid the electric bill?”
• “She’s finished the test already.”

**Note:** Already can go in between “have/has” and the past participle (as in the first two examples) or at the end of the sentence.

**Yet** can be used in negative statements and questions.

• “We haven’t cleaned the house yet.”
• “Has he told you the good news yet?”
• “Have they booked their tickets yet?”

**Note:** Yet usually goes at the end of the sentence or phrase.

**Recently, lately, and just**

Recently and lately can be used in positive statements, negative statements, or questions:

**Recently**

• “He’s recently lost some weight.”
• “I haven’t seen her recently.”
• “Have you spoken to Beth recently?”

**Lately**
• “I’ve gotten a lot of spam e-mails lately.”
• “Adam and Jessica haven’t been to church lately.”
• “Have you seen any good movies lately?”

Just (usually means very recent) is typically only used in positive statements and questions:

• “Don’t touch the walls – I’ve just painted them and they’re still wet.”
• “What book have you just finished reading?”

American English
In spoken American English, we often use the simple past with already, yet, and just:

• “Did you book the tickets yet?”
• “I already replied to the e-mail.”
• “We just got back from the gym.”

Quiz 2: Present Perfect with ever, never, already, recently, lately, and just

Question 1 - Has anyone ________ told you that you have lovely eyes?
   a. ever 
   b. never 
   c. lately

Question 2 - My husband’s sick, so he hasn’t been able to help me with the housework ________.
   a. just 
   b. never 
   c. lately

Question 3 - She’s ________ taken two weeks of vacation this year.
   a. lately 
   b. already 
   c. ever

Question 4 - Have you eaten lunch ________?
   a. yet 
   b. ever 
   c. just
**Question 5** - Sorry, Mr. Greene isn't available at the moment. He's ______ stepped out for lunch.

a. just  
b. yet  
c. lately

**Question 6** - He's _______ gotten any type of recognition for his hard work at the company.

a. recently  
b. already  
c. never

**Question 7** - They've _______ bought a house - the sale was finalized last week.

a. ever  
b. recently  
c. never

**Present Perfect with for/since**

The present perfect is also used with **for** and **since** to talk about actions that began in the past and continue to the present.

- “I've lived here since 2004.”
- “I've lived here for 8 years.”

**Since** is used with a **point in time**, and means “from that point in time until the present.” Use **since** with dates (2011, January, Tuesday, etc.), times (6:15, noon, this morning, etc.), and past events (I was a child, he graduated from college, etc).

**Since** is always used with the present perfect, and not the simple past:

- “I’ve gone to the beach every year since I was a child.”
  (repeated action that continues until today)  
- “I went to the beach when I was a child.”
  (finished action at a specific time in the past; I don’t go to the beach today)

**For** is used with a **time period**, and means “for that period of time until the present.” Use **for** with times of any length (five seconds, eight hours, two days, six weeks, nine months, ten years, a decade, centuries, etc.)

Be careful with **for**, because using the present perfect or the simple past can change the meaning:

- “We’ve lived in Berlin for 6 months.” (and we live in Berlin now)  
- “We lived in Berlin for 6 months.” (and we don’t live in Berlin now)
Quiz: Present perfect with FOR and SINCE

Question 1 - My internet connection hasn't been working _______ the last few minutes.
   a. for
   b. since

Question 2 - He's played the piano _______ he was 12.
   a. for
   b. since

Question 3 - They've owned their car _______ a long time.
   a. for
   b. since

Question 4 - You've been watching TV _______ over three hours.
   a. for
   b. since

Question 5 - Jill hasn't dated _______ her husband left her last July.
   a. for
   b. since

Question 6 - She's been promoted twice _______ 2007.
   a. for
   b. since

Question 7 - We've been waiting for you _______ 7:00!
   a. for
   b. since

Question 8 - We haven't been camping _______ many years.
   a. for
   b. since

Question 9 - Jim's been thinking about the problem _______ hours.
   a. for
   b. since
Question 10 - I haven’t worn high heels _______ my wedding.

a. for
b. since

Present Perfect Simple / Present Perfect Continuous
How to form the present perfect continuous:

Positive and negative statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>AUXILIARY VERB</th>
<th>BEEN</th>
<th>-ING FORM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>have</td>
<td>been</td>
<td>working here since 1992.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He</td>
<td>hasn’t</td>
<td>been</td>
<td>sleeping well lately.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION WORD</th>
<th>AUXILIARY VERB</th>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>BEEN</th>
<th>-ING FORM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How long</td>
<td>have</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>been</td>
<td>studying English?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long</td>
<td>has</td>
<td>she</td>
<td>been</td>
<td>playing tennis?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In some cases, the present perfect simple and the present perfect continuous are the same:

“I’ve worked here since 1992.” = “I’ve been working here since 1992.”

However, we often use the present perfect progressive to emphasize the action, and the present perfect simple to emphasize the result:

- “I’ve been working on the report for three weeks.” (emphasizes the action of working)
- “I’ve finished the project.” (emphasizes that the project is done)
- “We’ve been cleaning the house all afternoon.” (emphasizes the action of cleaning)
- “We’ve already cleaned the bathroom and the kitchen (emphasizes the fact that the bathroom and kitchen are done)

Be careful: Remember that “state” verbs are never used in continuous form.

- ____“I’ve been knowing my best friend since elementary school.”
- ____“I’ve known my best friend since elementary school.”
- ____“She’s been understanding everything in the advanced class so far.”
- ____“She’s understood everything in the advanced class so far.”
In spoken English, we often use the present perfect progressive to talk about ways you have spent your time recently:

“Hi, Joanna! What have you been up to lately?”
“I’ve been training for a karate competition.”
“Wow – good luck! And how is your son?”
“He’s good. He’s been studying a lot lately because finals are coming up next week.”

**Quiz: Present Perfect Continuous / Present Perfect Simple**

**Question 1** - Sally's phoned five times this morning - it must be urgent.
   a. Correct
   b. Incorrect

**Question 2** - I've been trying to start my car for the past 45 minutes.
   a. Correct
   b. Incorrect

**Question 3** - Have you been working out lately? You look stronger.
   a. Correct
   b. Incorrect

**Question 4** - How long has she been teaching at this school?
   a. Correct
   b. Incorrect

**Question 5** - Have you ever been thinking about getting a masters degree?
   a. Correct
   b. Incorrect

**Question 6** - Chris and I have been thinking about moving to Colorado.
   a. Correct
   b. Incorrect

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Question 7 - I've always been wanting a cat, but my father is allergic.
   a. Correct
   b. Incorrect

Question 8 - Jack hasn't gotten home yet.
   a. Correct
   b. Incorrect

Question 9 - We've agreed to sell our business for 2.5 million dollars.
   a. Correct
   b. Incorrect

Question 10 - My daughter has never been believing in Santa Claus.
   a. Correct
   b. Incorrect

Quiz Answers

Quiz 1: Present Perfect

1. b - Incorrect (They've already given...)
2. a - Correct
3. b - Incorrect (Gary has known...)
4. a - Correct
5. a - Correct
6. a - Correct
7. b - Incorrect (We've recently written...)
8. b - Incorrect (Laura has sold...)
9. b - Incorrect (I haven't taken...)
10. b - Incorrect (Have you ever met...)
11. a - Correct
12. b - Incorrect (No, they haven't eaten...)

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13. a - Correct

14. b - Incorrect (Have you ever driven...)

15. a - Correct

Quiz 2: Present Perfect with ever, never, already, recently, lately, and just

1. a - ever
2. c - lately
3. b - already
4. a - yet
5. a - just
6. c - never
7. b - recently

Quiz 3: Present perfect with FOR and SINCE

1. a - for
2. b - since
3. a - for
4. a - for
5. b - since
6. b - since
7. b - since
8. a - for
9. a - for
10. b - since
Quiz 4: Present Perfect Continuous / Present Perfect Simple

1. a - Correct
2. a - Correct
3. a - Correct
4. a - Correct
5. b - Incorrect (ever and never are only used with the present perfect simple)
6. a - Correct
7. b - Incorrect (want is a state verb)
8. a - Correct
9. a - Correct
10. b - Incorrect (believe is a state verb)