



Module: English

Branch: International Trade

Level: Third year Bachelor

Lecture 12: Present perfect or past simple?

1- The present perfect and The past simple

- The present perfect tells us about the past and the present. United have won the Cup, so it's theirs now.

The past simple tells us about the past, a time which is finished. Last year is in the past.

We use the past simple (not the present perfect) to talk about times in the past such as yesterday, last week,

in 1994, a hundred years ago.

*We **watched** United last week, NOT We have watched United last week.*

*Long ago dinosaurs **lived** here. NOT Long ago dinosaurs have lived here.*

Here are some more examples.

- PRESENT PERFECT

*Emma **has packed** her case.*

(So her things are in the case now.)

*Mike **has repaired** the chair.*

(So it's all right now.)

*The plane **has just landed**.*

***I've turned** the heating on. (It's on now.)*

PAST SIMPLE

*Emma **packed** her case last night.*

(Her things may be unpacked now.)

*Mike **repaired** the chair.*

(It may be broken again now.)

*The plane **landed** ten minutes ago.*

***I turned** the heating on earlier, but it's off again now.*

2- I've done it. I did it yesterday.

Trevor: *We've **bought** a new car.*

Tom: *Oh, have you? What sort?*

Laura: *An Adagio. We **bought** it last week.*

We often give a piece of news in the present perfect, e.g. *We've bought a new car.* (The car is ours now.) as when

and where it happened.

Here are some more examples. We

use the past simple, e.g. *We bought it last week,* to give details or to ask for details about things su

I've found my wallet. ~ Oh, good. Where ***did*** you ***find*** it?

Your parcel ***has arrived***. The postman ***brought*** it at eight o'clock.

They've ***closed*** the factory. ~ Really? When ***did*** they ***do*** that?

3- Structures with for, since and last

PRESENT PERFECT

We can say that something hasn't happened for a long time or since a specific time in the past.

We ***haven't had*** a party ***for*** ages.

We ***haven't had*** a party ***since*** Christmas.

- PAST SIMPLE

We can say that it is a long time since something happened or when was the last time it happened.

It's ages ***since*** we ***last had*** a party.

Christmas was ***the last time*** we ***had*** a party.

I've dropped my calculator. (It's on the floor now.) ***I dropped*** my calculator, but it seems to be OK.

- PRESENT PERFECT

We use the present perfect for a state which has gone on up to the present. (David is still in hospital.)

We've lived here for ten years.

(And we still live here.)

- PAST SIMPLE

We use the past simple for a state in the past, in a period which is finished. (David's stay in hospital is over.)

We lived there for ten years.

(We don't live there now.)

4- Have you (ever)...? and Did you (ever)...?

- PRESENT PERFECT

We use the present perfect for actions in a period of time up to the present.

This young director has made four films so far. ***He has made films*** means that it is possible he will make more films.

Here are some more examples.

Have you ever been to America? ~ Yes, twice. ***I've played*** table tennis before. ***We've never had*** any money.

5- Today, this week, etc

-PRESENT PERFECT

We use ***today*** and phrases with ***this*** for a period up to the present.

It hasn't rained today.

Have you seen this week's magazine?

-PAST SIMPLE

We use the past simple for actions in the past, a period which is finished.

The director made many films in his long career.

He made films means that his career in films is over. He won't make any more.

Did Churchill ever go to America? ~ Yes, I think so.

I played table tennis at college.

We never had any money in those days.

-PAST SIMPLE

We use ***yesterday*** and phrases with ***last*** for a past period.

It rained yesterday.

Did you see last week's magazine?

But sometimes **today** etc can mean a past period. Compare:

<p><i>/ haven't seen Rachel today.</i> (It's still daytime.) Has the post come this morning? (It's still morning.)</p>	<p><i>I didn't see Sarah at work today.</i> (The working day is over.) Did the post come this morning? (It's later in the day.)</p>
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