



PRESENT PERFECT

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

In this video students will gain a greater understanding of the present perfect tense and its practical use when constructing sentences.

The present perfect takes two forms and in fact is not a present tense at all, it's a past tense. It is very similar to the past simple but with a specific difference. We use the simple past to describe a single past action that has finished and generally **DOES** tell you when it happened and we use the present perfect to also describe a past action but we **DON'T** say when it happened.

See example below:

Last Saturday my wife and I went to the cinema. (past simple)

We have been to the cinema. (present perfect)

In this example "went" (simple past) the action is going to the cinema and **"WHEN"** is last Saturday. The word **"WENT"** is the past simple verb.

In this example "we have been" (present perfect) the action was going to the cinema but it doesn't say when.

Diagram 1a

Function 1

	PRESENT PERFECT TENSE	SIMPLE PAST TENSE
STRUCTURE	(HAVE OR HAS) PLUS (+) A PAST PARTICIPLE	REGULAR OR IRREGULAR VERB
HOW IT'S USED	FINISHED PAST ACTIONS DOES NOT SHOW WHEN (NO)	FINISHED PAST ACTIONS SHOWS WHEN (YES)
THE DIFFERENCE		

As you can see from diagram 1 above "The Difference" in the simple past tense the action in the past has finished and tells us **"WHEN"**

However, we use the present perfect tense to describe a past action that doesn't tell us

when. The meanings will be the same or similar but a time or date is not said.

See example below:

My wife and I have been to the cinema. (have+past participle been)

Go – went – been

In this example the visit to the cinema is again a finished past action but the sentence does not say **"WHEN"** and the structure is "have been" **HAVE + PAST PARTICIPLE** (been).

Diagram 1b

Function 2

	PRESENT PERFECT (USAGE 2)
STRUCTURE	HAVE OR HAS PLUS A PAST PARTICIPLE
HOW IT'S USED	THIS TENSE IS USED FOR A FINISHED PAST ACTION THAT MAY CONTINUE TO THE PRESENT AND MAY CONTINUE INTO THE FUTURE. WE ARE NOT SURE.
THE DIFFERENCE	

The present perfect tense actually has two functions. The first is explained above on page one. The second function, diagram above, is when the past action continues to the present and possibly continues into the future. We simply don't know from the information in the sentence.

See the diagram 1b.

See example below:

My wife and I have worked together for ten years.

In this sentence the action is **"HAVE WORKED"** have plus a past participle (worked). In this sentence it is not clear if we are still working together or we have stopped working together. However, the action started in the past and does not say **"WHEN"**

Work – worked – worked

More examples:

Function 1

Have you eaten fish and chips?

Steve has bought a new motorcycle.

Function 2

I have studied Portuguese all my life.

Steve has lived in Brazil for ten years.

Practice examples 1

Are these sentences PAST SIMPLE or PRESENT PERFECT? And if present perfect are they function 1 or function 2?

1. Steve has run in many marathons.
2. John goes to the cinema every Friday night.
3. Bill has played golf for over twenty years.
4. Did you play football last Saturday
5. John and Bill have played football together for the last five years.

The answers to these questions can be found in the downloadable document "Answers to questions"