

Unit 7

7.1 Present Perfect

Form

have/has + -ed (past participle)

The past participle of regular verbs ends in -ed. There are many common irregular verbs. See the list on p143.

Positive and negative

I	've (have)	worked in a factory.
We/You/They	haven't	
He/She/It	's (has) hasn't	

Question

Have	I we/you/they	been to the United States?
Has	he/she/it	

Short answer

Have you been to Egypt?	Yes, I have./No, I haven't.
Has she ever written poetry?	Yes, she has./No, she hasn't.

Note

We cannot use *I've, they've, he's*, etc. in short answers.

Yes, I have. NOT ~~Yes, I've.~~

Yes, we have. NOT ~~Yes, we've.~~

Use

- 1 The Present Perfect looks back from the present into the past, and expresses what has happened before now. The action happened at an indefinite time in the past.

I've met a lot of famous people. (before now)

She has won awards. (in her life)

She's written twenty books. (up to now)

The action can continue to the present, and probably into the future.

She's lived here for twenty years. (she still lives here)

- 2 The Present Perfect expresses an experience as part of someone's life.

I've travelled a lot in Africa.

They've lived all over the world.

Ever and *never* are common with this use.

Have you ever been in a car crash?

My mother has never flown in a plane.

- 3 The Present Perfect expresses an action or state which began in the past and continues to the present.

I've known Alice for six years.

How long have you worked as a teacher?

Note that the time expressions *for* and *since* are common with this use. We use *for* with a period of time, and *since* with a point in time.

We've lived here for two years. (a period of time)

I've had a beard since I left the army. (a point in time)

Note

In many languages, this use is expressed by a present tense. But in English, we say:

Peter has been a teacher for ten years.

NOT ~~Peter is a teacher for ten years.~~

- 4 The Present Perfect expresses a past action with results in the present. It is often a recent past action.

I've lost my wallet. (I haven't got it now.)

The taxi's arrived. (It's outside the door now.)

Has the postman been? (Are there any letters for me?)

The adverbs *just*, *already*, and *yet* are common with this use. *Yet* is used in questions and negatives.

She's just had some good news.

I've already had breakfast.

Has the postman been yet?

It's 11.00 and she hasn't got up yet.

7.2 Present Perfect and Past Simple

- 1 Compare the Past Simple and Present Perfect.

Past Simple

- 1 The Past Simple refers to an action that happened at a definite time in the past.

He died in 1882.

She got married when she was 22.

The action is finished.

I lived in Paris for a year (but not now).

- 2 Time expressions + the Past Simple

I did it

in 1999.

last week.

two months ago.

on March 22.

for two years.

Present Perfect

- 1 The Present Perfect refers to an action that happened at an indefinite time in the past.

She has won awards.

She's written twenty books.

The action can continue to the present.

She's lived there for twenty years (and she still does.)

- 2 Time expressions + the Present Perfect

I've worked here

for twenty years.

since 1995.

since I left school.

We've never been to America.

- 2 Compare these sentences.

X	I've broken my leg last year.
✓	I broke my leg last year.
X	He works as a musician all his life.
✓	He has worked as a musician all his life.
X	When have you been to Greece?
✓	When did you go to Greece?
X	How long do you have your car?
✓	How long have you had your car?