

Present Perfect vs Past Simple Exercises

Level: A2, B1

Present perfect or past simple?

The past simple reports finished actions at a finished time; the present perfect connects past actions to now — the time period is open or the result still matters.

Past simple: finished time: yesterday, last year, in 2015, two days ago → I saw him yesterday.

Present perfect: unfinished time or no time given: today, this week, ever, never → I have seen him today.

The time test: if you can ask 'when exactly?' and answer with a finished date, use the past simple

Life experience: Have you ever...? uses the perfect; the follow-up details switch to the past simple

Signal words: perfect: ever, never, just, already, yet, since, for, so far — past: yesterday, ago, last..., in + past year

Exercise 1: Choose the correct tense

Select the correct option to complete each sentence.

- I ___ my homework two hours ago.
a) have finished b) finished c) finish
- I can't find my phone. I think I ___ it.
a) lost b) have lost c) lose
- ___ you ___ to the new shopping center yet?
a) Did / go b) Have / been c) Have / gone
- My grandmother ___ born in 1948.
a) was b) has been c) is
- This is the best pizza I ___ in my life!
a) ate b) have ever eaten c) ever ate

Exercise 2: Complete the sentences

Type the correct form of the verb in brackets — present perfect or past simple.

- We ___ that museum when we were in Paris. (visit)
- She ___ her leg, so she can't play on Saturday. (break)
- I ___ him three times this week. (see)
- They ___ to Portugal last summer. (move)
- ___ you ever ___ a marathon? (run)

Exercise 3: Put the words in order

Click the words in the correct order to build the sentence.

11. Put the words in the correct order: **never / I / sushi / have / eaten**

12. Put the words in the correct order: **did / last night / what / you / do / ?**

13. Put the words in the correct order: **just / the bus / has / left**

14. Put the words in the correct order: **in 2018 / graduated / my brother / from university**

Exercise 4: True or false?

Decide if each statement is true or false.

15. "I have seen him yesterday" is correct. True / False
16. "Have you ever been to Japan?" asks about your whole life up to now. True / False
17. After answering "Yes, I have", we usually give the details in the past simple. True / False
18. American and British English always use these two tenses in exactly the same way. True / False

Answer key

Exercise 1: Choose the correct tense

1. b) finished
2. b) have lost
3. b) Have / been
4. a) was
5. b) have ever eaten

Exercise 2: Complete the sentences

6. visited
7. has broken / 's broken
8. have seen / 've seen
9. moved
10. have / run / have run

Exercise 3: Put the words in order

11. I have never eaten sushi
12. what did you do last night ?
13. the bus has just left
14. my brother graduated from university in 2018

Exercise 4: True or false?

15. False
16. True
17. True
18. False