

A

Study this example situation:



Tom is looking for his key. He can't find it.  
 He **has lost** his key. (*present perfect*)  
 This means that he doesn't have his key *now*.

Ten minutes later:



Now Tom **has found** his key. He has it now.  
 Has he **lost** his key? No, he **has found** it.  
 Did he **lose** his key? Yes, he **did**.  
 He **lost** his key (*past simple*)  
 but now he **has found** it. (*present perfect*)

The present perfect (something **has happened**) is a *present* tense. It always tells us about the situation *now*. 'Tom **has lost** his key' = he doesn't have his key *now* (see Unit 7).

The past simple (something **happened**) tells us only about the *past*. If somebody says 'Tom **lost** his key', this doesn't tell us whether he has the key now or not. It tells us only that he lost his key at some time in the past.

Do *not* use the present perfect if the situation now is different. Compare:

- They've **gone** away. They'll be back on Friday. (they are away *now*)  
 They **went** away, but I think they're back at home now. (*not* They've gone)
- It **has stopped** raining now, so we don't need the umbrella. (it isn't raining *now*)  
 It **stopped** raining for a while, but now it's raining again. (*not* It has stopped)

B

You can use the present perfect for new or recent happenings:

- 'I've **repaired** the TV. It's working OK now.' 'Oh, that's good.'
- Have you heard the news? Sally **has won** the lottery!

Use the past simple (*not* the present perfect) for things that are not recent or new:

- Mozart **was** a composer. He **wrote** more than 600 pieces of music.  
 (*not* has been ... has written)
- My mother **grew** up in Scotland. (*not* has grown)

Compare:

- Did you know that somebody **has invented** a new type of washing machine?
- Who **invented** the telephone? (*not* has invented)

C

We use the present perfect to give new information (see Unit 7). But if we continue to talk about it, we normally use the past simple:

- A: Ow! I've **burnt** myself.  
 B: How **did** you **do** that? (*not* have you done)  
 A: I **picked** up a hot dish. (*not* have picked)
- A: Look! Somebody **has spilt** something on the sofa.  
 B: Well, it **wasn't** me. I **didn't** do it. (*not* hasn't been ... haven't done)

A

Do not use the present perfect (**I have done**) when you talk about a *finished* time (for example, yesterday / ten minutes ago / in 1999 / when I was a child). Use a past tense:

- It was very cold yesterday. (*not has been*)
- Paul and Lucy arrived ten minutes ago. (*not have arrived*)
- Did you eat a lot of sweets when you were a child? (*not have you eaten*)
- I got home late last night. I was very tired and went straight to bed.

Use the past to ask **When ... ?** or **What time ... ?**:

- When did** your friends arrive? (*not have ... arrived*)
- What time did** you finish work?

Compare:

*Present perfect*

- Tom **has lost** his key. He can't get into the house.
- Is Carla here or **has she left**?

*Past simple*

- Tom **lost** his key yesterday. He couldn't get into the house.
- When did** Carla leave?

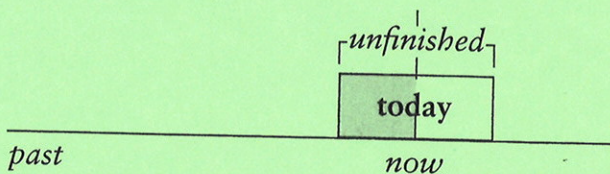
B

Compare:

*Present perfect (have done)*

- I've **done** a lot of work today.

We use the present perfect for a period of time that continues *until now*. For example: today / this week / since 1985.

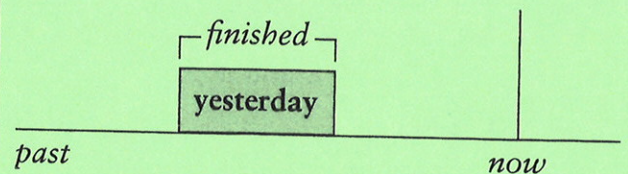


- It **hasn't** rained this week.
- Have you seen** Anna this morning? (it is still morning)
- Have you seen** Tim recently?
- I don't know where Lisa is. I **haven't seen** her. (= I haven't seen her recently)
- We've **been waiting** for an hour. (we are still waiting now)
- Ian lives in London. He **has lived** there for seven years.
- I **have never played** golf. (in my life)
- It's the last day of your holiday. You say: It's been a really good holiday. I've really enjoyed it.*

*Past simple (did)*

- I **did** a lot of work yesterday.

We use the past simple for a *finished* time in the past. For example: yesterday / last week / from 1995 to 2001.



- It **didn't** rain last week.
- Did you see** Anna this morning? (it is now afternoon or evening)
- Did you see** Tim on Sunday?
- A: **Was** Lisa at the party on Sunday?  
B: I don't think so. I **didn't** see her.
- We **waited** (*or were waiting*) for an hour. (we are no longer waiting)
- Ian **lived** in Scotland for ten years. Now he lives in London.
- I **didn't** play golf last summer.
- After you come back from holiday you say: It was a really good holiday. I really enjoyed it.*