Riverside Community College
Directed Learning Activity ESL 54

Topic: Simple Past Tense and Present Perfect Tense

Go to “ESL Applications” on the Writing & Reading Center’s computer. Click on the Understanding and Using English Grammar icon. Log in. If this is the first time you have used UUEG, please log in as a new student.

1. Go to “Chapter 3.” Listen to or read the introduction and review the rules in Charts 3-1.

2. Complete Exercises 2, 3, and 4 and check your answers. Be sure to use your dictionary to look up the meaning of any words you don’t know. Print the exercises.

3. Write a paragraph about your semester so far. What have you studied in your ESL class? What has helped you and what hasn’t? What has been difficult or challenging? Overall has it been a good experience or a bad one?
   - Use at least three verbs that you are not used to using.
   - Use past tense and present perfect tenses.
   - Underline the tenses and circle the time indicators you use in your paragraph.

Remember that when you write a paragraph, you will use present perfect to introduce or make a general statement and then switch to simple past tense to give specific examples.

   I like my class, but I have had some trouble with the paragraphs. For example, last week Mr. Smith gave an in-class writing and I had to use past tense. I forgot the difference between “sit” and “set,” so I wrote, “I set down in the chair.” I knew the difference, and it was a silly mistake.

4. Review your paragraph with an instructor in the Writing Center, and ask about anything you don’t understand.

Instructor/Tutor Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________
Riverside Community College  
Directed Learning Activity ESL 543A 

Answer Key: Present Perfect Tense  
Chart 3-1 Present Perfect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3-1 PRESENT PERFECT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) They <em>have moved</em> into a new apartment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(b) <em>Have you ever visited</em> Mexico?</td>
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<tr>
<td>(c) I <em>have never seen</em> snow.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(d) I <em>have already seen</em> that movie.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(e) Jack <em>hasn't seen</em> it yet.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(f) Ann started a letter to her parents last week, but she <em>still hasn't finished</em> it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(g) Alex feels bad. He <em>has just heard</em> some bad news.</td>
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The present perfect expresses the idea that something happened (or never happened) before now, at an unspecified time in the past. The exact time it happened is not important. 

If there is a specific mention of time, the simple past is used: *They moved into a new apartment last month.* 

Notice in the examples: the adverbs *ever, never, already, yet, still,* and *just* are frequently used with the present perfect.

| (h) We *have had* four tests *so far* this semester. |
| (i) I *have written* my wife a letter every other day *for the last two weeks.* |
| (j) I *have met* many people *since* I came here in June. |
| (k) I *have flown* on an airplane *many times.* |

The present perfect also expresses the repetition of an activity before now. The exact time of each repetition is not important. 

Notice in (h): *so far* is frequently used with the present perfect.

| (l) I *have been* here *since* seven o'clock. |
| (m) We *have been* here *for* two weeks. |
| (n) I *have had* this same pair of shoes *for three years.* |
| (o) I *have liked* cowboy movies *ever since I was a child.* |
| (p) I *have known* him *for many years.* |

The present perfect, when used with *for* or *since,* also expresses a situation that began in the past and continues to the present.* 

In the examples, notice the difference between *since* and *for:*

*since + a particular time*  
*for + a duration of time*

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*The verbs used in the present perfect to express a *situation* that began in the past and still exists are typically verbs with a stative meaning (see Chart 2-3).*

The present perfect progressive, rather than the present perfect, is used with action verbs to express an *activity* that began in the past and continues to the present (see Chart 3-2):

*I've been sitting at my desk for an hour. Jack has been watching TV since seven o'clock.*

Note: Stative or non-action verbs are not used in the progressive form. Refer to Chart 2-3

Teaching Note:
- Present perfect (Have + Past participle) is used with an action that started in the past and is still continuing.
- Simple past is used for a completed action.
EXERCISE 2. Present perfect. (Charts 2-7 and 3-1)

Complete the dialogues. Type in the correct present perfect form of the verbs in bold. Use the negative form of the verb when necessary.

1. A: Look at Bob. Did he just eat another candy bar?
   B: I think he has an addiction to chocolate. He has eaten five or six candy bars today already!

2. A: Is Hanna at work today?
   B: No. She hasn’t been here since last week. I think she's on vacation.

3. A: Kurt fell asleep in class again today. Did you notice?
   B: He has fallen asleep in class nearly every day this week! Maybe he has a night job.

4. A: Do you feed the baby solid food yet?
   B: Just cereal. We haven't fed her anything else yet

5. A: You’d better tell us the truth! Did you steal those diamonds?
   B: I swear, Officer, I haven't stolen anything since I got out of jail!

6. A: Did you hear? Diego won a new bicycle in the company lottery!
   B: He's so lucky! I never have never won anything in my whole life.

7. A: Psssst, Nora! Do you understand what the professor is talking about?
   B: Are you kidding? I haven't understood a word since the semester started!

8. A: Are you going to the reception to meet the new president?
   B: I have met him already.

9. A: Are you going to take Chemistry next semester?
   B: I don't think so. I have taken enough science courses already.

10. A: Did Thompson really break his arm in the football game last night?
    B: Yes. It's the third time this season that a player has broken a bone.

Words in RED indicate an incomplete or undefined time, so perfect tense is used instead of simple past tense.

Example:

Bob has eaten five or six candy bars today already. (Today is not finished—still in progress)
Bob ate five candy bars today. (Bob won’t eat any more because the day is over or he has exhausted his supply of candy bars. Also note that when a specific number is used, simple past tense is used.)
EXERCISE 3. Present perfect vs. simple past. (Charts 2-9 and 3-1)

Before you do the exercise, click 🎞️ in the picture on the left. Watch the presentation about Harry's life.

Complete the sentences. Click on the drop-down box. Then click on the correct answer.

1. Our neighbor Harry loves his old house. He **has lived** there since he was a child. (He is still living there—continuing action.)
2. When Harry got married, his wife **moved** into the house. (Single action—finished action)
3. They **lived** there together for 54 years until she died **two years ago**. (They no longer live there together—finished action.)
4. Harry lives in his old house by himself now. He **has lived** there alone since **his wife's death**. (He is still living there alone—continuing action.)
5. Harry and his wife **had** a happy life together. (They are no longer together—finished action)
6. Harry planted the young tree in his yard years ago, and it **has grown** into a big, beautiful shade tree. (The tree is still growing—continuing action)

EXERCISE 4. Present perfect vs. simple past. (Charts 2-9 and 3-1)

For each item, click on the incorrect word or phrase. Then type the correction in the pop-up box.

1. I was wondering if something was wrong. It is 10:15 and the teacher (didn’t arrive) **hasn’t arrived yet**. (continuing action)
2. Maria’s flight (has landed) **landed** twenty minutes ago. Let’s look for her in the baggage claim area. (completed action)
3. I just got a Christmas card from the German couple I (have met) **met** in Bermuda **last summer**. (completed action)
4. Brian (was) **has been** in love with Carol for more than a year. I wonder if he’ll ever get up the courage to ask her to marry him. (continuing action)
5. Tectru Computer Company (had) **has had** four CEOs in the past three years. (continuing action)
6. Tectru Computer Company (has expanded) **expanded** its international operations during the last two quarters of last year. They have no further expansion plans for this year. (completed action in past)