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English Grammar. Theory and Practice

The Verb

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1.5. THE PRESENT PERFECT SIMPLE

Form

Affirmative	Interrogative
I/you/we/they have played/seen	Have I/you/we/they played/seen?
He/she/it has played/seen	Has he/she/it played/seen?

Negative	Negative-Interrogative
I/you/we/they have not played/seen	Have I/you/we/they not played/seen?
I/you/we/they haven't played/seen	Haven't I/you/we/they played/seen?
He/she/it has not played/seen	Has he/she/it not played/seen?
He/she/it hasn't played/seen	Hasn't he/she/it played/seen?

Use

An action or state prior to the moment of speaking may be expressed both by the Past Tense and by the Present Perfect. But, while the Past Tense presents the action without referring to the present moment, the Present Perfect links that past action with the present. This means that when we have the Past Tense, we think of the time when something happened or we narrate a sequence of events at a given time. So, the Present Perfect is used:

1. When we are no longer interested in the time when the past action took place, but in its result into the present:

I **have visited** an interesting museum. (I still remember the things seen there.)

2. When the past action continues in the present and, perhaps, it will go on into the future, too:

Many pupils **have learnt** in this school. (In the past, some children learnt here, in the present others are learning and, of course, in the future, other pupils will learn here, too.)

3. To express completed activities in the immediate past. In this case, the verb is generally accompanied by **just**, **lately**, **recently**, **of late**, **latterly**, **till now**, **up to now**, **so far**, **up to the present**, **during the last week**, **the last few days**, **these twenty minutes**, etc.:

The train **has just left**. (It left a little time ago.)

We **have not seen** Jack **lately**.

One should not confuse this use of **just** with the use of the adverb **just** meaning "barely" or "nearly". When having these meanings, it can occur with different tenses:

Mike **just wanted** to help us.

4. With words denoting an incomplete period of time: **today**, **this week**, **this month**, **this year**, **all day**, **all night**, **this morning**, etc.:

Last week we wrote three letters, but *this week* we **have written** only one. (up to now)

But we can also say:

This week I wrote the mechanic a cheque for the repairs. (earlier in the week)

Mention must be made of the fact that **this morning, all night, all evening** come with the Past Tense if they express a complete period of time. Thus, we shall say:

*I **have seen** a good film **this morning**. (We are before 12 o'clock at noon.)*

*I **saw** a good film **this morning**. (We are in the afternoon or in the evening.)*

5. With **How long**, when it is concerned with a period of time extending into the present:

*How long **have you been** ill? (You are still ill.)*

But, when it refers only to a past period, the Past Tense or the Past Perfect are to be employed:

*How long **did you stay** in London last year?*

*How long **had you known** him when he died?*

6. With adverbs of indefinite time or expressing frequency: **ever, never, often, seldom, always, several times**:

*We **have never visited** New York.*

***Have you ever been** to the North Pole?*

In this case **ever** and **never** mean "at any (no) time up to the present". But, when **ever** means "at any time during a period of time completely past" or "at any time in the future," it can be used with other tenses, too:

***Did you ever meet** his sister? (When you spent your holiday in that town, etc.)*

When **always** covers a certain period of time in the past, the Past Tense is to be found here:

*She **always loved** him. (As long as he lived, etc.)*

Ever may also be an intensive adverb approaching the meaning "whatever" or "at all". Under such circumstances the Past Tense is employed:

*Nobody **ever helped** David Copperfield when he worked in London.*

Rhetorical questions referring back to the past often contain **ever**:

***Did you ever see** a more beautiful landscape?*

7. With the adverbs **already** and **yet**. Both of them may appear in interrogative sentences with one difference though: while **yet** indicates that the question is supposed to find out whether the action is finished or not, **already** shows that we are surprised that the action is over:

Tom usually gets up at 7 o'clock in the morning.

- a) *It is 7 o'clock. Mother gets into Tom's bedroom and asks:*

Have you got up yet?

b) It is 6.30 in the morning. Mother sees that the light is on in Tom's bedroom.

She opens the door and asks him:

Have you got up already?

Already may also occur in affirmative sentences:

The student **has already translated** the lesson.

In negative sentences **yet** has the meaning of **(nu) încă**:

Albert **has not learnt** the poem **yet**.

8. With **since** and **for**.

Since denotes the beginning point of a period of time that extends up to the present. It is translated into Romanian by **din, de la, de când**:

They **have not seen** Alice **since** 1989/Christmas/she went to London.

When the action of the time clause introduced by **since** is parallel to the one expressed by the Present Perfect, the Present Perfect occurs in the time clause, too:

I **have known** Maggie **since** she **has been working** in our factory.

For refers to a period of time that continues up to the present. Its meaning is of **de atâta ... timp**. The Present Perfect in a sentence containing **for** may be translated into Romanian either by **Prezent** (Present):

These boys **have been** here **for** half an hour.

(Acești băieți **sunt** aici de jumătate de oră.)

or by **Perfectul compus** (The Compound Perfect):

My neighbour **has not repaired** the roof of his house **for** a long time.

(Vecinul meu **nu și-a reparat** acoperișul casei de mult timp.)

When **for** concerns a terminated period of time, the verb must be in the Past Tense:

My uncle **lived** in London **for** five years and then he moved to Paris.

9. For past actions whose time is not mentioned:

Has Peter had lunch?

10. In newspapers and broadcasts to introduce an action which will be described in the Simple Past Tense. The time in the second sentence is often given:

A terrible accident **has happened**; a car ran into a group of children and killed three of them.

11. To express a future action, in a time clause, prior to another one represented by a future tense. The Present Perfect is usually accompanied in this context by: **after, when (=after), as soon as, till/until, by the time (that), the moment (that)**:

I shall ring you up **as soon as/after** mother **has come** back.

12. In conditional clauses:

Little Paul will come here at once if Granny **has made** a cake.

Mary will not be permitted to go for a walk in the park unless she **has done** her homework.

13. To describe a past action that has present consequences:

Jane **has not eaten** anything and so she is hungry now.

14. With **This/It is the first/second... /best/worst/most...**

*This is the first time I **have seen** this car. (not: that I see)*

*It is the third time you **have made** the same type of mistakes. (not: that you make)*

Exercises



1. Fill in the blanks with *have* or *has*:

1. We ... seen an interesting film. 2. My sister ... finished school this month. 3. You ... finally understood him. 4. George ... not driven his car for three months. 5. I ... written all the exercises. 6. We ... drunk a lot of coffee this morning. 7. You ... just told me a good joke. 8. Our friend ... never visited New York. 9. I ... travelled by car. 10. We ... picked all the ripe apples.

2. Build up sentences with the following words using the Present Perfect according to the model:

Christine/to speak/English.

Christine has spoken English.

1. Mr. Parker/to buy/a new hat; 2. We/to open /the window; 3. The children/to wash/their hands; 4. You/to say/good morning; 5. I/to meet/my former deskmate; 6. The teacher/to explain/another problem; 7. You/to understand/this rule at last; 8. The Browns/to plant/a lot of trees; 9. You/to play/cricket very well; 10. The children/ to drink/a lot of orange juice; 11. We/to swim/to the shore; 12. I/to ring up/my friend; 13. Little Tom/to eat/all the cakes; 14. Our grandparents/to arrive; 15. You/to have/your lunch; 16. I/to hear/that noise again; 17. We/to show/you our reports; 18. The girl/to lend/me an interesting book; 19. The farmers/to pick/the fruit in the orchard; 20. The pupil/to clean/the blackboard.

3. Turn the following sentences into the Present Perfect Simple:

1. I go to school. 2. We draw some red flowers. 3. Jane spends three weeks in the mountains. 4. You find many mistakes. 5. She changes her clothes. 6. The sun rises. 7. You sweep the floor. 8. We work hard at school. 9. I eat some grapes. 10. We help our mother. 11. All the children are present. 12. I try to understand him. 13. You have breakfast. 14. Peter does a lot of exercises. 15. We cross the street. 16. The children come home. 17. The teacher repeats the sentence. 18. I give her some flowers. 19. You wash your face. 20. We make our beds.

4. Work on the model:

Are you having dinner?

No, I have just had it.

1. Is John writing the exercise? 2. Are you reading this book? 3. Am I drinking a cup of tea now? 4. Are the pupils singing the new song? 5. Is Mary making a new dress? 6. Are you

explaining a problem to your brother? 7. Am I opening the English book now? 8. Are we playing volleyball now? 9. Are you ironing the shirts now? 10. Is your friend crossing the street now?

5. Work on the model:

John lives in a village now. He ... here for one year.
--

John lives in a village now. He has lived here for one year.

1. We skate in winter. We ... several times this winter. 2. I repair cars. I ... their car three times this year. 3. You write good poems. You ... just ... a new one. 4. They publish many books every year. They ... the tenth one this year. 5. Alice sings beautifully. She ... in many performances. 6. You often cut flowers. You ... beautiful ones today. 7. I catch fish in summer. I ... several big ones. 8. Mike often meets us in the morning. He ... us several times lately. 9. My sister often breaks things. She ... two glasses this week. 10. You eat many cakes. You ... mine, too.

6. Work on the model:

Another ship sank on the reef last week. A lot of ships ... on that reef.

A lot of ships have sunk on that reef.

1. The dog bit the milkman yesterday. It ... my friend, too. 2. I took a picture of my little son in the park last week. I ... a picture of him today, too. 3. We felt the cold yesterday. We ... the cold a lot this winter. 4. The teacher drew the pupils' attention to those mistakes. He ... just ... their attention to another one. 5. The thieves stole Mr. Brown's car on Friday night. They ... a lot of cars this summer. 6. You gave the children sweets in the morning. Now, you ... them some chocolate, too. 7. Martin woke up late yesterday morning. He ... late this morning, too. 8. We heard strange noises last night. We ... just ... them again. 9. The farmer grew a lot of vegetables last year. He ... many vegetables this year, too. 10. The girls wove a beautiful carpet in the school workshop last year. They ... another one this year, too.

7. Work on the model:

I am going to speak to her.

Have you ever spoken to her before?

Yes, I have/No, I haven't.

1. Jane is going to play tennis.

... she ... tennis before?

Yes, she ...

2. They visit many museums.

... they ... the Art Museum, too?

No, they ...

3. I am going to write to the school master.
... you ... to him before?
Yes, I ...
4. You often forget your book there.
... I ... it today, too?
No, you ...
5. My parents drink coffee every day.
... they ... coffee today, too?
Yes, they ...
6. I tell my daughter stories every evening.
... you ... her a story this evening?
Yes, I ...
7. We spend a lot of money on books.
... you ... a lot recently?
Yes, we ...
8. You show us many good paintings.
... I ever ... you bad paintings?
No, you ...
9. I know a lot of details about this accident.
... you ... them before?
No, I ...
10. The girls make good cakes.
... they ... a good cake today, too?
Yes, they ...

8. Turn the following sentences into the interrogative:

1. I have remembered her address. 2. We have come in time. 3. You have told me a secret.
4. Lucy has worked hard today. 5. We have thought about that. 6. I have forgotten her name.
7. Tom has known her for a long time. 8. You have had a swim. 9. The children have bought many sweets. 10. I have written a long composition. 11. You have discovered the mistake.
12. They have met their friends. 13. We have asked the policeman about this address.
14. Robert has stopped in front of the gate. 15. Mary and Tom have laid the table. 16. You have opened all the windows. 17. Martin has repaired the toy. 18. The children have laughed a lot. 19. I have noticed the change. 20. You have thanked them.

9. Make up questions with the following words using the Present Perfect according to the model:

Granny/to arrive
Has Granny arrived?