

Present perfect and past (2) (**I have done** and **I did**)

A

Do *not* use the present perfect (**I have done**) when you talk about a *finished* time (for example, *yesterday* / *ten minutes ago* / *in 1985* / *when I was a child*). Use a *past* tense:

- The weather **was** nice *yesterday*. (*not* 'has been nice')
- They **arrived** *ten minutes ago*. (*not* 'have arrived')
- I **ate** a lot of sweets *when I was a child*. (*not* 'have eaten')
- A: **Did** you see the news on television *last night*? (*not* 'Have you seen')
- B: No, I **went** to bed early. (*not* 'have gone')

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

- **When** did they arrive? (*not* 'have they arrived')
- **What time** did you finish work?

Compare:

*Present perfect*

- Tom **has lost** his key. He can't get into the house.

Here, we are not thinking of the past action. We are thinking of the present result of the action: Tom doesn't have his key *now*.

*Past simple*

- Tom **lost** his key *yesterday*. He couldn't get into the house.

Here, we are thinking of the action in the past. We don't know from this sentence whether Tom has his key *now*.

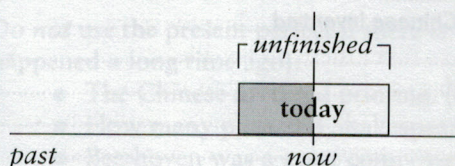
B

Compare present perfect and past:

*Present perfect (have done)*

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

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



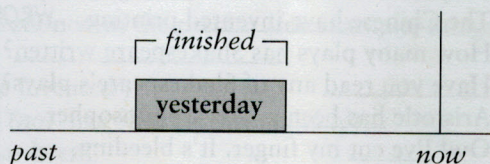
- It **hasn't** rained *this week*.
- **Have** you seen Ann *this morning*? (it is still morning)
- **Have** you seen Ann *recently*?
- I don't know where Ann is. I **haven't** seen her. (= I haven't seen her recently)
- We've **been waiting** for an hour. (we are still waiting now)
- Ian lives in London. He **has lived** there for seven years.
- I **have never** played golf. (in my life)

The present perfect always has a connection with *now*. See Units 7–12.

*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 1985 to 1991*.



- It **didn't** rain *last week*.
- **Did** you see Ann *this morning*? (it is now afternoon or evening)
- **Did** you see Ann *on Sunday*?
- A: **Was** Ann 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 when I was on holiday *last summer*.

The past simple tells us only about the past. See Units 5–6.