14 Present Perfect or Past Simple? (1)

1 I have done or I did?

We've won the Cup! It's ours at last!

The Present Perfect tells us about the past and the present. United have won the Cup, so it's theirs now.

Well, we won the Cup last year.

The Past Simple tells us about the past, a time which is finished. Last year is in the past.

We use the Past Simple (not the Present Perfect) to talk about times in the past such as yesterday, last week, in 1994, a hundred years ago.

We watched United last week. NOT We have watched United last week.  
Long ago dinosaurs lived here. NOT Long ago dinosaurs have lived here.

Here are some more examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present Perfect</th>
<th>Past Simple</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emma has packed her case.</td>
<td>Emma packed her case last night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(So her things are in the case now.)</td>
<td>(Her things may be unpacked now.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike has repaired the chair.</td>
<td>Mike repaired the chair.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(So it's all right now.)</td>
<td>(It may be broken again now.)</td>
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<td>The plane has just landed.</td>
<td>The plane landed ten minutes ago.</td>
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<td>I've turned the heating on. (It's on now.)</td>
<td>I turned the heating on earlier, but it's off again now.</td>
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<td>I've dropped my calculator. (It's on the floor now.)</td>
<td>I dropped my calculator, but it seems to be OK.</td>
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2 I’ve done it. I did it yesterday.

Trevor: We’ve bought a new car.  
Tom: Oh, have you? What sort?  
Laura: An Adagio. We bought it last week.

We often give a piece of news in the Present Perfect, e.g. We’ve bought a new car. (The car is ours now.) We use the Past Simple, e.g. We bought it last week, to give details or to ask for details about things such as when and where it happened.

Here are some more examples.

I've found my wallet. ~ Oh, good. Where did you find it?  
Your parcel has arrived. The postman brought it at eight o'clock.  
They've closed the factory. ~ Really? When did they do that?

3 Structures with for, since and last

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present Perfect</th>
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<tr>
<td>We can say that something hasn’t happened for a long time or since a specific time in the past.</td>
<td>We can say that it is a long time since something happened or when was the last time it happened.</td>
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<tr>
<td>We haven't had a party for ages.</td>
<td>It’s ages since we last had a party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We haven't had a party since Christmas.</td>
<td>Christmas was the last time we had a party.</td>
</tr>
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Practice

A I have done or I did? (1)

Put in the correct verb form.

- I’ve done ........ (I / do) all the housework. The flat is really clean now.
- A young couple bought ........ (buy) the house next door. But they didn’t live there long.
- Our visitors arrived ........ (arrive). They’re sitting in the garden.
- There’s still a problem with the television. Someone .................. (repair) it, but then it broke down again.
- (I / lose) my bank card. I can’t find it anywhere.
- The match .................. (start). United are playing well.
- My sister .................. (run) away from home. But she came back two days later.
- Daniel .................. (earn) some money last week. But I’m afraid he’s already spent it all.
- (we / plant) an apple tree in the garden. Unfortunately it died.
- Prices .................. (go) up. Everything is more expensive this year.
- Someone .................. (turn) on the hi-fi. What’s that song called?
- (I / phone) the office at eleven to speak to the manager, but he isn’t there today.
- .................. (I / make) a cake. Would you like a piece?
- The runner Amos Temila .................. (break) the world record for the 1500 metres in Frankfurt. Then two days later in Helsinki, Lee Williams ran it in an even faster time.

B I’ve done it. I did it yesterday. (2)

Things that have happened today are on the radio and TV news.

Give the news using the Present Perfect and Past Simple.

- the Prime Minister / visit Luton University / speak to students there / earlier today
  The Prime Minister has visited Luton University. He spoke to students there earlier today.
- the train drivers / go on strike / stop work / at twelve o’clock
- the Queen / arrive in Toronto / fly there / in an RAF aircraft
- two men / escape from Parkhurst Prison / get away / during the night
- the actor Howard Bates / die in a car accident / his car / crash into a wall
- Linda Jones / win the women’s marathon / run it / in 2 hours 27 minutes

C Structures with for, since and last (3)

Complete the conversations.

- Mike: This car is filthy. I haven’t been to the car wash for about a year.
  Tom: What! You mean it’s twelve months since you last went ........ to the car wash?
- Laura: I haven’t used my camera recently. June was the last time I took a photo.
- Rachel: I haven’t seen Andrew for weeks.
  Daniel: Nor me. It’s .................. him.
- Tom: What about a game of cards? We haven’t played since your birthday.
  David: Really? You mean my birthday ........ cards?
- Emma: I feel terrible. It’s three days since I ate anything.
  Vicky: What did you say? You .................. three days?