

14 Present Perfect or Past Simple? (1)

1 I have done or I did?



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

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.

PRESENT PERFECT

*Emma **has packed** her case.*
(So her things are in the case now.)
*Mike **has repaired** the chair.*
(So it's all right now.)
*The plane **has just landed**.*
*I've **turned** the heating on.* (It's on now.)
*I've **dropped** my calculator.* (It's on the floor now.)

PAST SIMPLE

*Emma **packed** her case **last night**.*
(Her things may be unpacked now.)
*Mike **repaired** the chair.*
(It may be broken again now.)
*The plane **landed ten minutes ago**.*
*I **turned** the heating on **earlier**, but it's off again now.*
*I **dropped** my calculator, but it seems to be OK.*

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

PRESENT PERFECT

We can say that something hasn't happened for a long time or since a specific time in the past.
*We **haven't had** a party **for** ages.*
*We **haven't had** a party **since** Christmas.*

PAST SIMPLE

We can say that it is a long time since something happened or when was the last time it happened.
*It's ages **since** we **last had** a party.*
*Christmas was **the last time** we **had** a party.*

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.
- 1 Our visitors (arrive). They're sitting in the garden.
- 2 There's still a problem with the television. Someone (repair) it, but then it broke down again.
- 3 (I / lose) my bank card. I can't find it anywhere.
- 4 The match (start). United are playing well.
- 5 My sister (run) away from home. But she came back two days later.
- 6 Daniel (earn) some money last week. But I'm afraid he's already spent it all.
- 7 (we / plant) an apple tree in the garden. Unfortunately it died.
- 8 Prices (go) up. Everything is more expensive this year.
- 9 Someone (turn) on the hi-fi. What's that song called?
- 10 (I / phone) the office at eleven to speak to the manager, but he isn't there today.
- 11 (I / make) a cake. Would you like a piece?
- 12 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.
- 1 the train drivers / go on strike / stop work / at twelve o'clock
.....
- 2 the Queen / arrive in Toronto / fly there / in an RAF aircraft
.....
- 3 two men / escape from Parkhurst Prison / get away / during the night
.....
- 4 the actor Howard Bates / die in a car accident / his car / crash into a wall
.....
- 5 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?
- 1 Laura: I haven't used my camera recently. June was the last time I took a photo.
Trevor: Really? I'm surprised you June.
- 2 Rachel: I haven't seen Andrew for weeks.
Daniel: Nor me. It's him.
- 3 Tom: What about a game of cards? We haven't played since your birthday.
David: Really? You mean my birthday cards?
- 4 Emma: I feel terrible. It's three days since I ate anything.
Vicky: What did you say? You three days?