

GRAMMAR EXPLANATION

What is the present perfect?

The present perfect tense has many uses. One use is to describe an experience (or lack of an experience) from an unspecified point in time. For example:

I have visited Russia.

I haven't visited Portugal.

The first sentence more or less means that you have the experience of visiting Russia. The sentence may mean you went there once, maybe twice, or even many times. We don't know the exact time, only that it has happened. It is your experience. The second sentence means you don't have the experience of going to Portugal.

What is the sentence structure?

subject | have | past participle | object/complement

I | have | swum | the English Channel.

I | have | met | the Australian Prime Minister.

I | haven't | finished | medical school.

Note that you can add the number of times you've had the experience, too. For example:

I have swum the English Channel *twice*.

I have met the Australian Prime Minister *many times*.

I have visited Brazil *only once*.

However, you can't give a specific date. Instead, we would use the simple past to express a specific point in time. Take a look at the following:

X I have met the Australian Prime Minister *on August 25th, 2007*.

O I *met* the Australian Prime Minister *on August 25th, 2007*.

In addition, we often use the adverbs *ever* and *never* when talking about experiences. Most of the time, *ever* appears in the question or the negative answer. On the other hand, *never* usually appears in the answer only. *Never* sometimes appears in written English, and less often in spoken English.

A: Have you *ever* studied German?

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B: No, I haven't *ever* studied German. -or- No, I have *never* studied German.

Note that *never* is a negative adverb, so the auxiliary verb *have* is positive.

How is the present perfect used?

When talking about past experiences, the present perfect is used to ask a question and to provide the answer. It's important to understand that when providing additional information, the simple past tense is used thereafter. For example:

A: Have you ever visited Russia.

B: Yes, I *have* (*visited* Russia). I *went* there last summer for two weeks. I *stayed* for...

-or-

A: Where have you traveled overseas?

B: I've *been* to Russia, Poland, Germany, and Brazil.

A: Which country *did* you *like* the most?

Is there additional information on the present perfect tense?

No, that's it!

ACTIVITY

Here are a few sentences to practice using the target language correctly.

Rewrite each sentence using the present perfect tense.

I traveled on the Trans-Siberian railway a few years ago.

I have traveled on the Trans-Siberian railway.

1. I went to see Machu Picchu in Peru last summer.

_____ .

2. He goes skydiving every time he visits Hawaii.

_____ .

3. They like to enroll in cooking courses from time to time.

_____ .