

## Present Perfect Structure

The present perfect is made using the auxiliary verb **have** plus the **past participle** of the main verb.

The past participle, for regular verbs, is the same as the past simple.

Infinitive	Past Simple	Past Participle
work	worked	worked
live	lived	lived
watch	watched	watched

So we have, for the present perfect:

*I have worked*

*He has lived*

*They have watched*

For the past participle of irregular verbs, check [this page](#).

Here is the verb **live** in all forms of the present perfect.

Present Perfect		
<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Question</i>
I have lived	I haven't lived	Have I lived?
You have lived	You haven't lived	Have you lived?
He has lived	He hasn't lived	Has he lived?
She has lived	She hasn't lived	Has she lived?
It has lived	It hasn't lived	Has it lived?

We have lived	We haven't lived	Have we lived?
You have lived	You haven't lived	Have you lived?
They have lived	They haven't lived	Have they lived?

**She's not lived** is also possible but not as common as **she hasn't lived**.

## Present Perfect Use

We use the present perfect for two main functions.

### A. Indefinite Past.

Look at these two sentences. What is the difference?

*I went to Paris in 1997.*

*I have been to Paris two times.*

In the second sentence, we use **past simple** because we are talking about a **specified time in the past**, 1997.

In the second sentence, though, we are just saying "**at some time in my life**" without being specific as to exactly when we have been to Paris - so we use the **present perfect**.

The **present perfect** used in this way means "**at some time in the past**".

### Examples:

*I **have lost** my watch.* - but we don't say when.

*She **has seen** that film before.* - again, we don't say when.

*President Bush **has told** his advisors to work on tax cuts.* - was is yesterday, last Wednesday? We don't know - we just know he has done it.

Now look at the same examples with **more specific time** expressions. Note how we have to use the **past simple** in these sentences.

*I **lost** my watch last Wednesday at the swimming pool.*

*She **saw** that film with Terry before Christmas.*

*President Bush **had** a meeting with his cabinet yesterday late in the evening and **told** them he was interested in working towards tax cuts.*

## Books For English Students

Using the present perfect in this way is often used to talk about one's **experiences** of life. **Have you ever..?** is a common question.

A: **Have** you ever **visited** Russia?

B: No, I **haven't**. I would like to one day.

A: **Have** you ever **been** to New York?

B: Yes, I **have**. I went in 1993.

Note how, in the second dialogue, the person responding uses the **past simple** to say **when** he went to New York.

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### B. Unfinished Past.

Look at these two sentences, what is the difference?

*Bill Clinton was the President from 1992 to 2000.*

*George Bush has been the President since 2000.*

Who is the President now? Bill Clinton was the President in the past. Now his time in the White House is **finished, over** - so we use the **past simple**. George Bush is still the

president. His time at the White House started in the past but **it continues now** - so we use the **present perfect**.

The Present Perfect in this way, **joins the past and the present** and speaks about both.

The **present perfect** used in this way means "**unfinished past**".

### **Examples:**

*I have lived in this house for 18 years. I love it!*

*He has worked for this company since 1987 and is now department manager.*

In both these examples, the action started in the past but **continues still** today. If the action started **and finished** in the past, we must use the **past simple**:

*I lived in that house for ten years but then I bought a new house in the country.*

*He worked for IBM for six years, then went to work for Microsoft.*

Using the present perfect in this way is often used to talk about the **duration** of your current activities. A common question is **How long have you...?**

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### **Present Simple, Past Simple or Present Perfect?**

#### **Read this:**

I have a beautiful gold watch. It is from France and it's very old. I bought it in 1976 when I spent the summer in Paris as a student. I have had this wonderful timepiece for over 25 years.

*I have a watch.* - here we talk only about the present and so use the **present simple**.

*I bought it in 1976.* - here we talk only about the past and so use the **past simple**.

*I have had it for over 25 years.* - here we are talking about the past and the present

together. You had the watch in the past and you still have it now in the present. So here we use the **present perfect**.

Remember what we said before about the present perfect **connecting** the past and the present.