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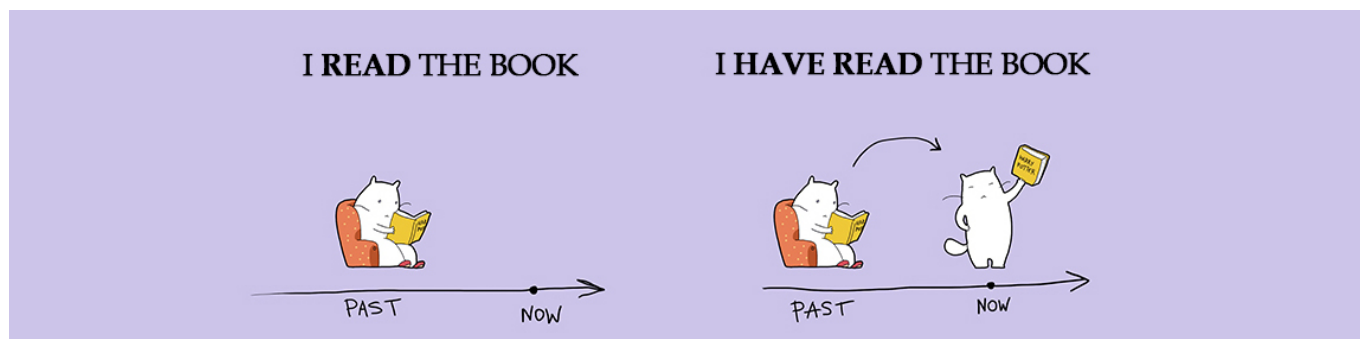
How do you choose between the **Present Perfect** and **Past Simple**?

Both Present Perfect and Past Simple are used to talk about a **completed** action. The difference is the following:

**Present Perfect** denotes recent actions and events which are connected with the **present**.

**Past Simple** denotes actions and events in **finished time periods** (last week, yesterday, at the weekend, etc.).

Compare:



via <http://www.lingvistov.ru/blog/grammar/present-perfect-vs-past-simple-exercises/>

## Present Perfect or Past Simple?

So, how do you choose between the Present Perfect and Past Simple?

### Present Perfect

The **Present Perfect** is used to talk about an action that took place in the recent past and is still relevant to the present moment.

- Jack **has lived** in Madrid for 10 years so far (and he still lives there).

- *I've **just finished** reading this book, it's so amazing (this happened recently and now I share my impressions).*

The structure is:

**have / has + [Past Participle](#)**

The common usages of Present Perfect are:

1. to put emphasis on the result: - *She **has broken** a cup.*
2. to express an action that started in the past and continues up to the present: - *I **have worked** for this company for 10 years.*
3. to talk about life experiences: - *I've never **traveled** alone.*
4. to say about an action repeated in an unspecified period between the past and now: - *I **have visited** them many times.*
5. when the precise time of action is not important or unknown: - *Someone **has stolen** my bike!*

Present Perfect is often used with the words like 'just', 'already', 'recently', 'lately', 'still', 'this week/month/year', 'today', etc. to denote a recent activity or event.

In statements showing an event or situation which began in the past and continues now, we often use time expressions with *since* and *for*, e.g. *for a week, since yesterday, for a long time, since 2010*:

- *I love my new office, I've **worked** there for five months already.*
- *Today we celebrate our anniversary, we've **been** married since 2007.*

## **Past Simple**

Generally speaking, the **Past Simple** is used to talk about something that happened at a definite time in the past (*yesterday, last week, ago, then, when, etc.*).

- *He **went** to the cinema two hours ago.*
- *We **travelled** to Australia last summer.*

The structure is:

**verb + '-ed'** (for regular verbs) or Past Simple form of [irregular verbs](#)

The common usages of Past Simple are:

1. to denote actions that are finished: - *Pushkin **wrote** many interesting books.*
2. to denote actions in finished time periods (there's no result in present): - *I **saw** him yesterday.*
3. to denote repeated or habitual actions in the past: - *When I was a child, I **visited** my grandma every weekend.*

Past Simple is used with finished time words: *last, ago, yesterday, in 1990, etc.*

- *Mary **phoned** for a taxi and left home at 10 o'clock yesterday (finished period of time).*
- *The sun **shone** all Monday (finished period of time).*

## Comparing

The Present Perfect is used when a *particular time is not specified*. Past Simple is used with *specific times in the past*.

### Past Simple

**have / has + [Past Participle](#)**

*I **saw** a great movie yesterday.*

*John **climbed** Mount Everest in 2016. Alison **has climbed** Mount Everest twice.*

*Margaret **ate** too much last night.*

### Present Perfect

**verb + '-ed'** or Past Simple of [irregular verbs](#)

*I **haven't seen** that movie.*

*Alison **has climbed** Mount Everest twice.*

*Tom **hasn't eaten** curry before.*

Quite often the Past Simple is used immediately after the Present Perfect. In such cases we use the Past Simple to give more details or information:

- - ***Have** you **been** to Russia?*
- - *Yes, I have. I **visited** Moscow last May.*
- - *I've **lost** my watch. I **put** it on the table and now I can't find it.*
- - *Timothy **has passed** his exam. He **got** 80%.*

Watch this funny video from oomongzu to understand the difference between Present and Past Simple:

See also:

[Present Perfect for Unfinished Past](#)

[Present Perfect with 'Just' and 'Yet'](#)

[Present Perfect or Past Perfect?](#)

[Present Perfect: Statements](#)

[Past Simple: Statements](#)