

Contrast: Past Simple and Present Perfect

Read the dialogue:



Beth Have you ever been to Bulgaria?
Fred Yes, I went there last year with my family. Have you been there?
Beth No, I haven't. What cities did you visit?
Fred We didn't visit any cities. We went skiing.
Beth Sounds great. I've never been skiing, but I'd love to go. Was it good?
Fred Not really. I fell and broke my leg on the first day, so I spent the rest of the holiday in hospital!

LEARN THIS! Past simple and present perfect contrast



a We use the present perfect to talk about an experience at any time in the past. The exact time of the experience is not stated.

I've read 'The Hobbit' three times.

Have you ever travelled by helicopter?

b We use the past simple to talk about a specific occasion in the past.

I watched a good film on TV last night.

Did you go to Newcastle last weekend?

c We often use the present perfect to ask and answer questions about an experience, and then use the past simple to give specific information about it.

'Have you ever been to the USA?'

'Yes, I have. I went to New York last winter.'

Read the **Learn this!** box. Why are some verbs in the dialogue in the **past simple** and others in the **present perfect**? Use rules a-c to explain.

LOOK OUT!

! We often use *been* (instead of *gone*) as the past participle of *go*. It means the person has gone and come back.

She's been to a museum. (She's now back at the hotel.)

She's gone to a museum. (She's still there.)

Complete the sentences with *been* or *gone*.

- 1 I'm sorry, Adam isn't here. He's _____ to the shops.
- 2 My parents have _____ on holiday. They'll be back next week.
- 3 My hair is wet because I've _____ to the swimming pool.
- 4 Bess was here earlier, but now she's _____.
- 5 I've _____ to Paris but I don't remember it very well.

Some of the sentences are incorrect. Rewrite them correctly.

- 1 I've read six books last year. *X*
I read six books last year.
- 2 Jo washed her hair last night.
- 3 I had this watch since March.
- 4 Have you ever been to Spain?
- 5 'Tidy your room, please.' 'I already tidied it.'
- 6 We've eaten at that restaurant last Tuesday.
- 7 Peter has gone to the shops on Friday morning.
- 8 I've been kayaking twice in the last year.
- 9 'Did you do your homework yet?' 'No, not yet.'

Complete the sentences. Use the past simple form of the verb in one sentence, and the present perfect in the other.

1 have

- a I _____ this laptop since my birthday.
- b We _____ dinner in the garden last night.

2 not buy

- a I _____ a new jacket in the sale last weekend.
- b I _____ any new clothes for months.

3 leave

- a I _____ home at seven and arrived at school at eight.
- b I _____ your dinner in the fridge. You can heat it up later.

4 not text

a I _____ you last night because I don't have your number.

b Jim _____ his girlfriend since Monday. She's a bit upset about it.

5 go

a I _____ to Turkey three times. The last time was in 2011.

b Liam _____ to Morocco last summer.

Complete the dialogues with the verbs. Use the past simple or the present perfect.

go go never go not have stay visit

Max 1 _____ you _____ to Portugal?

Lucy Yes, I 2 _____ there last summer.

Max 3 _____ you _____ Porto?

Lucy No, we 4 _____ time. We 5 _____ in Lisbon.

Max I'd like to see Lisbon. I 6 _____ there.

be be not go see see

Tom I 7 _____ the new *Iron Man* film last Saturday.

8 _____ you 9 _____ it?

Sarah No, I haven't. I 9 _____ to the cinema for ages.

10 _____ it good?

Tom Yes, it 11 _____ great. You should see it.

LOOK OUT!

! We use finished-time phrases (e.g. *yesterday*, *last week*, *at 2 p.m.*) with the past simple but not with the present perfect.

I went to London last May. ✓

I've been to London last May. X

Read the **Look out!** box. Circle the correct words to complete the sentences.

- 1 I travelled / I've travelled to Paris on the Eurostar last May.
- 2 Tom loves the *Hunger Games* books. He read / He's read them all.
- 3 'Did you ever eat / Have you ever eaten at the Chinese restaurant in town?' 'No, never.'
- 4 I bought / I've bought this scarf on Saturday. Do you like it?
- 5 Where's my maths homework? Oh, no! I forgot / I've forgotten it!
- 6 Amy went on holiday to France last week. She met / She's met some really nice people.

Complete the dialogue with the verbs below. Use the present perfect or the past simple. Remember the difference between *been* and *gone*.

be go go not see spend take visit visit watch

A ¹ _____ you ever _____ abroad?

B Yes, I ² _____ the USA last summer with my family.

A What ³ _____ it like? I ⁴ _____ never _____ to America.

B Really interesting. We ⁵ _____ a week in New York.

We ⁶ _____ a boat trip round Manhattan and we

⁷ _____ a basketball game at Madison Square Garden.

A Cool! ⁸ _____ you _____ the Empire State Building?