Unit 13

Present perfect and past 1 (**I have done** and **I did**)

A Study this example situation:

Tom is looking for his key. He can't find it.
He **has lost** his key. *(present perfect)*
This means that he doesn't have his key *now*.

Ten minutes later:

Now Tom **has found** his key. He has it now.
Has he **lost** his key? No, he **has found** it.
Did he **lose** his key? Yes, he **did**.
He **lost** his key *(past simple)*
but now he **has found** it. *(present perfect)*

The present perfect (something **has happened**) is a *present* tense. It always tells us about the situation *now*. 'Tom **has lost** his key' = he doesn't have his key *now* (see Unit 7).

The past simple (something **happened**) tells us only about the *past*. If somebody says 'Tom **lost** his key', this doesn't tell us whether he has the key now or not. It tells us only that he lost his key at some time in the past.

Do *not* use the present perfect if the situation now is different. Compare:

- They**'ve gone** away. They'll be back on Friday. (they are away *now*)
  They **went** away, but I think they're back at home now. (*not* They've gone)
- It **has stopped** raining now, so we don't need the umbrella. (it isn't raining *now*)
  It **stopped** raining for a while, but now it's raining again. (*not* It has stopped)

B You can use the present perfect for new or recent happenings:

- 'I**'ve repaired** the washing machine. It's working OK now.' 'Oh, that's good.'
- 'Sally **has had** a baby! It's a boy.' 'That's great news.'

Usually, you can also use the past simple:

- I **repaired** the washing machine. It's working OK now.

Use the past simple (*not* the present perfect) for things that are not recent or new:

- Mozart **was** a composer. He **wrote** more than 600 pieces of music.
  (*not* has been ... has written)
- My mother **grew** up in Italy. (*not* has grown)

Compare:

- Did you know that somebody **has invented** a new type of washing machine?
- Who **invented** the telephone? (*not* has invented)

C We use the present perfect to give new information (see Unit 7). But if we continue to talk about it, we normally use the past simple:

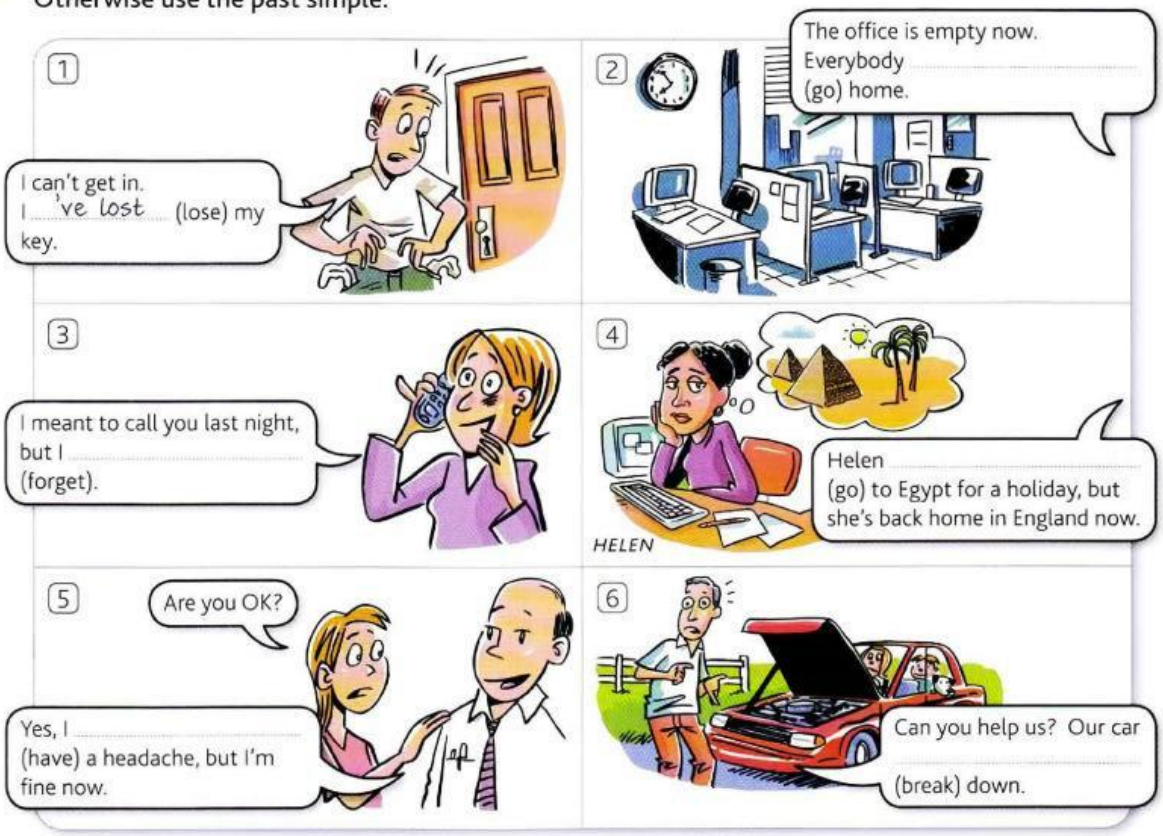
- A: Ow! I**'ve burnt** myself.
  B: How **did** you **do** that? (*not* have you done)
  A: I **picked** up a hot dish. (*not* have picked)
- A: Look! Somebody **has spilt** something on the sofa.
  B: Well, it **wasn't** me. I **didn't do** it. (*not* hasn't been ... haven't done)

Past simple → Unit 5 Present perfect → Units 7–8 Present perfect and past 2 → Unit 14
American English → Appendix 7

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Exercises

13.1 Complete the sentences using the verbs in brackets. Use the present perfect where possible. Otherwise use the past simple.



13.2 Are the underlined parts of these sentences right or wrong? Correct them where necessary.

1 Did you hear about Sue? She's given up her job. OK
2 My mother has grown up in Italy. grew
3 How many poems has William Shakespeare written? .....
4 Ow! I've cut my finger. It's bleeding. .....
5 Drugs have become a big problem everywhere. .....
6 Who has invented paper? .....
7 Where have you been born? .....
8 Ellie isn't at home. She's gone shopping. .....
9 Albert Einstein has been the scientist who has developed the theory of relativity. .....

13.3 Put the verb into the correct form, present perfect or past simple.

1 It stopped raining for a while, but now it's raining again. (it / stop)
2 The town where I live is very different now. It has changed a lot. (it / change)
3 I studied German at school, but ..... most of it now. (I / forget)
4 The police ..... three people, but later they let them go. (arrest)
5 What do you think of my English? Do you think ..... ? (it / improve)
6 A: Are you still reading the paper?
B: No, ... with it. You can have it. (I / finish)
7 ..... for a job as a tourist guide, but I wasn't successful. (I / apply)
8 Where's my bike? ..... outside the house, but it's not there now. (it / be)
9 Quick! We need to call an ambulance. ..... an accident. (there / be)
10 A: Have you heard about Ben? ..... his arm. (he / break)
B: Really? How ..... ? (that / happen)
A: ..... off a ladder. (he / fall)

LIVEWORKSHEETS