GRAMMAR

PRESENT PERFECT VS SIMPLE PAST

The internet

Do not confuse the present perfect with the simple past.

EXAMPLES	EXPLANATION
Compare: a. Sergey Brin **came** to the U.S. in 1979. b. Sergey Brin **has been** in the U.S. since 1979. a. Brin and Page **started** Google in 1998. b. Google **has been** popular since 1998.	Sentences (a) show a single action in the past. This action does not continue. Sentences (b) show the continuation of an action or state from the past to the present.
a. When **did** Brin **come** to the U.S.? b. How long **has** Brin **been** in the U.S.?	Question (a) with *when* uses the simple past tense. Question (b) with *how long* uses the present perfect tense.

Fill in the blanks with the simple past or the present perfect of the verb in parentheses ( ).

A: Do you like to surf the Internet?

B: Of course, I do. I've had (example: have) my Internet connection since 1999, and I love it. A couple of months ago, I _____ (buy) a new computer with lots of memory and speed. And last month I _____ (change) to a better service provider. Now I can surf much faster.

A: What kind of things do you search for?

B: Lots of things. I _____ (always/want) to learn about the stock market, and with the Internet, I can start to learn. Last week I _____ (make) my first investment in the stock market.

A: Do you ever buy products online?

B: Sometimes I do. Last month, I _____ (find) a great site where I can download music for 99¢. So far I _____ (download) about a hundred songs, and I _____ (make) several CDs. My old computer _____ (not/have) a CD burner, so I'm very happy with my new one.

A: _____ (you/sell) your old computer?

B: No. It was about eight years old. I just _____ (remove) the hard drive and _____ (leave) the computer on top of the garbage dumpster. When I _____ (pass) by a few hours later, it was gone. Someone _____ (take) it.

A: Was your new computer expensive?

B: Yes, but I _____ (get) a great deal online.

A: I _____ (have) my computer for three years, and it seems so old by comparison to today's computers. But it's too expensive to buy a new one every year.

B: There's a joke about computers: When is a computer old?

A: I don't know. When?

B: As soon as you get it out of the box!