

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.	Sentences (a) show a single action in the past. This action does not continue.
a. Brin and Page started Google in 1998. b. Google has been popular since 1998.	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 <i>when</i> uses the simple past tense. Question (b) with <i>how long</i> 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!