

Past Simple vs Present Perfect: The Mystery Case

Directions: Read the story below. Fill in each blank using either the past simple or the present perfect form of the verb in parentheses. Tip: pay attention to specific time clues and present consequences.

Detective James Smith is very tired. He _____ (work) as a private investigator for ten years, but today is a uniquely strange day.

He looks at his desk. "Someone _____ (steal) my favorite coffee mug!" he shouts.

His assistant, Clara, sighs. "Sir, you _____ (leave) it in the breakroom yesterday afternoon. Go look there."

James walks down the hallway. He _____ (walk) down this same hallway thousands of times before, but today it feels different. He opens the breakroom door and gasps. The room is a total disaster!

"What happened here?" James asks.

Clara walks in behind him. "Oh, the pipe _____ (burst) two hours ago. Water is everywhere. The plumber _____ (already / arrive), so he is fixing it now."

James looks around and spots his mug on a counter. It is safe! He smiles and says, "Well, I _____ (find) my mug, but I still need my morning coffee."

Suddenly, his phone rings. It is a new client. "Help me, Detective!" the client says. "My rare diamond _____ (disappear) from my safe!"

James grabs his coat. He is excited. He _____ (never / solve) a diamond theft case in his entire career.

"Don't worry," James says into the phone. "I _____ (solve) many difficult mysteries in my life, and I will solve yours too." He rushes out the door to start his new adventure.