



Explanations

Recent events

Present perfect simple

The present perfect simple is used to describe recent events.

I've left my shopping bag behind.

The event happened in the past, but there is a result in the present.

I've broken my arm, as you can see.

No definite time is given for the event, but to emphasise the idea of recentness we can use *just*.

I've just broken my watch.

We can also describe events that have not happened.

I haven't found her phone number yet.

Indefinite events

- Present perfect simple

No definite time is given for the events. They are a series of actions in our life up to now.

I've been to France three times.

After *It's/This is the first/second time* we use the present perfect. It also refers to our life up to now.

This is the first time I have eaten Japanese food.

- Compared with past simple

Events described using the past simple have definite times.

I went to France last year.

I ate at a Japanese restaurant on Saturday.

If we think of a definite place for an event, this may suggest a definite time.

I left my shopping bag on the train.

Extended or repeated events

- Present perfect simple

The present perfect simple describes a state which lasts up to the present.

I've lived in this house for five years.

The present perfect simple can describe a habitual action in a period of time up to the present.

I've never worn a tie to work, and I refuse to start now!

- Present perfect continuous

The present perfect continuous can also describe a state which lasts up to the present moment.

I've been living in this house for five years.

There is little difference in meaning between simple and continuous in this case, or with *How long* questions.

How long have you lived/been living in this house?

The verbs *wait, sit, lie, stay* prefer the present perfect continuous.

I've been waiting for ages.

For, since, ago

See Grammar 14 for contrast between these time expressions.

**Present perfect
simple or
continuous?**

- Completed action

The present perfect simple can show that an action is complete.

I've finished my homework!

If we say *how many* or *how much* we use the simple form. A certain amount has been completed.

I've written ten pages of my homework!

- Not completed

The present perfect continuous can show that an action is not completed, or that it has finished recently.

We've been walking for hours! Let's have a rest.

I've been digging the garden. That's why I'm so dirty!

- Present result or action in progress

We use the present perfect simple if our attention is on the present result.

I've written my homework. Now I can watch the television.

We use the present perfect continuous if our attention is on the action in progress.

I've been writing my homework all evening! I didn't know it would take so long.