



Word Classes in E4BT

Past Tenses' Forms and Usages

**** Past Simple vs Present Perfect ****

PAST SIMPLE

FORMS

affirmative form

I became
You became
He/She/It became
We became
You became
They became

negative form¹

I did not become
You did not become
He/She/It did not become
We did not become
You did not become
They did not become

interrogative form

Did I become?
Did you become?
Did he/she/it become?
Did we become?
Did you become?
Did they become?

USAGES

✧ talking about states and actions which finished in the past:

- Alexander Fleming **discovered** penicillin.
- 'Did you **read** the paper?' 'Yes, and I **sent** it back to the Journal'.
- When she **was** young, she **wanted** to be a biologist.

✧ saying when something took place in the past, i.e., referring to a definite moment or period in the past:

- They **left** at half past nine.
- I **met** the Director of ECDC [*European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control*] yesterday.
- The first probable infections of BSE [*Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy*] in cows **occurred** during the 1970s in the UK.

¹ The contracted form of the auxiliary (**didn't**) is mainly used in spoken or informal English.

✧ **describing events in a past narrative:**

- Last year the Ministry of Health **introduced** two new vaccines and **recommended** to include them in all immunisation programmes.

✧ **when a time clause, (also called “adverbial of time”), ending with ago (= before now) is used:**

- I **spoke** to them an hour ago.
- Ebola virus disease **broke out** in Central Africa forty-six years ago.

EXAMPLES OF TIME ADVERBS USED WITH THE PAST SIMPLE:

at:	at ten o'clock / at the end of the month / at the weekend, ...
in:	in the morning / in July / in 2001 / in the 1980s / in the summer ...
on:	on Tuesday / on Tuesday afternoon / on March 10 th ...
no preposition:	yesterday / a few days ago / last week / when I was young

* * * * *

PRESENT PERFECT

FORMS

affirmative form²

I have bred
You have bred
He/She/It has bred
We have bred
You have bred
They have bred

negative form³

I have not bred
You have not bred
He/She/It has not bred
We have not bred
You have not bred
They have not bred

interrogative form

Have I bred?
Have you bred?
Has he/she/it bred?
Have we bred?
Have you bred?
Have they bred?

² Auxiliary's contracted forms – namely 've and 's – are mainly used in spoken or informal English.

³ Auxiliary's contracted forms – namely haven't and hasn't – are mainly used in spoken or informal English.

USAGES

✧ talking about the present effects of past or recent events: results/consequences/ fallout

- The EMA President **has resigned**.
- They **have redesigned** their website.
- **Have you heard** the news? Protein pharmaceuticals **have become** the fastest growing class of therapeutics owing to their beneficial impacts on the treatment of severe and life-threatening conditions and diseases.

✧ talking about experiences in someone's life up to the present:

- She **has travelled** a lot and **has lived** in several countries.

✧ announcing news:

- Our email address **has changed**.
- The WHO **has announced** a shocking finding about the air we breathe.

✧ with time references that combine past and present: e.g., “this year” usually stands for “from the beginning of the year until now”:

- This year the programme **has vaccinated** about 13,000 children.

✧ when adverbs such as *already, ever, never, just, still, yet, not ... yet, so far, up to now, over the last few days, recently, lately*, and so on, are used.

WARNING:

already goes between the auxiliary and the full verb:

- I **have** already **studied** present tenses in English.

ever is used in questions and is often followed by an answer in the past simple:

- ‘**Have** you ever **worked** abroad?’ ‘Yes, I have. I **worked** for a research lab in London. That was about ten years ago’.

never goes between the auxiliary and the full verb:

- I **have** never **been** to the United States⁴.

⁴ Pay attention to the differences between *been* and *gone*:

- They have **been** to Italy twice this year. (they have come back)
- They have **gone** to Italy. (they are still there)

yet is usually at the end of the sentence:

- 'Is the report ready?' 'No, I **haven't finished** it yet'.
- **Have** George and Vanessa **arrived** yet?

still goes in front the verbal chain (auxiliary + full verb):

- We still **haven't finished** the installation. It's taking a long time.

so far is usually at the end or at the beginning of the sentence:

- We've **had** a good year so far.
- The hottest temperature of 2024 so far **has been recorded** in Essex.
- So far, only five mAbs [*monoclonal antibodies*] **have been approved** for the management of infectious states.

WARNING!!!! Sometimes such adverbs may be "hidden" in English, but when you translate into Italian it may be necessary to add an adverb or a time reference in order to better combine past and present:

- Polio is an example of a disease that **has been eradicated** in the USA as a result of vaccines. Other diseases that **have been** nearly **eradicated** in the USA include diphtheria, bacterial influenza, measles, mumps, rubella and tetanus, according to Vox. Worldwide, two diseases – smallpox and rinderpest, a disease that affects cattle – **have been wiped** out.

✧ when a time clause introduced by the prepositions **for** and **since** is used:

- She **has been** a researcher for ten years.
- From the Abyssinian to the Turkish van, cat lineages **have been bred** for decades to produce felines with minor physical distinctions.
- He **has had** the same job since 2006.
- In the United States alone bird flu **has affected** more than 82 million birds since 2022.