

Past Tenses in E4CP

Past Simple vs Present Perfect

PAST SIMPLE

A Form

- This table shows the past simple of the verb *to work*.

Affirmative	Negative	Question
<i>I worked</i>	<i>I did not (didn't) work</i>	<i>Did I work?</i>
<i>You worked</i>	<i>You did not (didn't) work</i>	<i>Did you work?</i>
<i>He/she/it worked</i>	<i>He/she/it did not (didn't) work</i>	<i>Did he/she/it work?</i>
<i>We worked</i>	<i>We did not (didn't) work</i>	<i>Did we work?</i>
<i>They worked</i>	<i>They did not (didn't) work</i>	<i>Did they work?</i>

- The verb *to work* is regular. Regular verbs add *-d* or *-ed* to the infinitive to form the affirmative.

B Irregular verbs

- There are many verbs where the affirmative of the past simple is irregular.

Uses

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

Mark Zuckerberg **co-founded** Facebook.

'**Did you read** the contract?' 'Yes, and I **sent** it back to the legal department'.

When she **was** young, she **wanted** to be a journalist.

- ✧ **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 ten.

I **met** the President yesterday.

The standards of living in Europe **went up** during the 1960s.

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

Last year we **introduced** a number of new products and **announced** record profits.

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

I **spoke** to them an hour ago.

Croatia **entered** the European Union thirteen years ago.

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 10th ...
- no preposition:** yesterday / a few days ago / last week / when I was young



PRESENT PERFECT

A Form

- We form the present perfect with the auxiliary *has/have* + the past participle.

Affirmative	Negative	Question
<i>I have ('ve) worked</i>	<i>I have not (haven't) worked</i>	<i>Have I worked?</i>
<i>You have ('ve) worked</i>	<i>You have not (haven't) worked</i>	<i>Have you worked?</i>
<i>He/she/it has ('s) worked</i>	<i>He/she/it has not (hasn't) worked</i>	<i>Has he/she/it worked?</i>
<i>We have ('ve) worked</i>	<i>We have not (haven't) worked</i>	<i>Have we worked?</i>
<i>They have ('ve) worked</i>	<i>They have not (haven't) worked</i>	<i>Have they worked?</i>

Uses

✧ **talking about the present effects of past or recent events:**

The President **has resigned**.

They **have redesigned** their website.

Have you heard the news? Our share prices **have crashed**.

✧ **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”:**

Our customer base **has grown** by 10% this year.

✧ **when time adverbs such as *already, ever, never, just, still, yet, not ... yet, so far, up to now, over the last few days* 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:**

Q.: **Have** you ever **worked** abroad?

A.: Yes, I have. I **worked** for a bank in London. That was about ten years ago.

***never* goes between the auxiliary and the full verb:**

I **have** never **been** to the United States¹.

***yet* is usually at the end of the sentence:**

‘Is the report ready?’ ‘No, I **haven’t finished** it yet’.

Have you **met** the new CEO 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.

¹ 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).

So far, they **haven't reached** an agreement.

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

He **has been** vice-president for ten years.

He **has attended** the University of Teramo for two years.

He **has had** the same job since 2006.

He **has lived** in London since 2010.