

A Study this example situation:



Tom is looking for his key. He can't find it.

He **has lost** his key. (*present perfect*)

This means that he doesn't have his key *now*.

Ten minutes later:



Now Tom **has found** his key. He has it now.

Has he lost his key? No, he **has found** it.

Did he lose his key? Yes, he **did**.

He **lost** his key (*past simple*)

but now he **has found** it. (*present perfect*)

The *present perfect* (something **has happened**) is a *present* tense. It tells us about the situation *now*. 'Tom **has lost** his key' = he doesn't have his key *now* (see Unit 7).

The *past simple* (something **happened**) tells us only about the *past*. If somebody says 'Tom **lost** his key', we don't know whether he has the key now or not. We know only that he lost it at some time in the past.

Compare *present perfect* and *past simple*:

- They **'ve gone** away. They'll be back on Friday. (they are away *now*)
- They **went** away, but I think they're back at home now. (*not* They've gone away)
- It **has stopped** raining now, so we don't need the umbrella. (it isn't raining *now*)
- It **stopped** raining for a while, but now it's raining again. (*not* It has stopped)

B You can use the present perfect for new or recent happenings:

- I **'ve repaired** the washing machine. It's working OK now.
- 'Hannah **has had** a baby! It's a boy.' 'That's great news.'

Usually, you can also use the past simple:

- I **repaired** the washing machine. It's working OK now.

Use the past simple (*not* the present perfect) for things that are not recent or new:

- Mozart **was** a composer. He **wrote** more than 600 pieces of music. (*not* has been ... has written)
- My mother **grew** up in Italy. (*not* has grown)

Compare:

Somebody **has invented** a new type of washing machine.
Who **invented** the telephone? (*not* has invented)

C We use the present perfect to give new information (see Unit 7). But if we continue to talk about it, we normally use the past simple:

- A: Ow! I **'ve burnt** myself.
B: How **did** you **do** that? (*not* have you done)
A: I **picked** up a hot dish. (*not* have picked)
- A: Look! Somebody **has spilt** something on the sofa.
B: Well, it **wasn't** me. I **didn't do** it. (*not* hasn't been ... haven't done)

Exercises

13.1 Complete the sentences. Use the present perfect where possible. Otherwise use the past simple.

1 I can't get in.
I 've lost (lose) my key.

2 The office is empty now.
Everybody
(go) home.

3 I meant to call you last night,
but I
(forget).

4 Helen
(go) to New York for a holiday, but
she's back home in London now.

5 Are you OK?
Yes, I (have) a
headache, but it's OK now.

before

6 Can you help us? Our car
(break) down.

13.2 Are the underlined parts of these sentences OK? Correct them where necessary.

- Did you hear about Sophie? She's given up her job. OK
- My mother has grown up in Italy. My mother grew up
- How many plays has William Shakespeare written?
- I've forgotten his name. Is it Joe or Jack?
- Who has invented paper?
- Drugs have become a big problem everywhere.
- We've washed the car, but now it's dirty again.
- Where have you been born?
- Ellie has gone shopping. She'll be back in about an hour.
- Albert Einstein has been the scientist who has developed the theory of relativity.

13.3 Put the verb into the correct form, present perfect or past simple.

- It stopped raining for a while, but now it's raining again. (it / stop)
- The town where I live is very different now. It has changed a lot. (it / change)
- I studied German at school, but most of it now. (I / forget)
- The police three people, but later they let them go. (arrest)
- What do you think of my English? Do you think? (it / improve)
- Are you ready to go? your coffee? (you / finish)
- for a job as a tour guide, but I wasn't successful. (I / apply)
- Where's my bike? outside the house, but it's not there now. (it / be)
- Quick! We need to call an ambulance. an accident. (there / be)
- A: I've found my phone.
B: Oh, good. Where it? (you / find)
A: at the bottom of my bag. (It / be)
- A: Ben won't be able to play tennis for a while. his arm. (He / break)
B: Oh. How? (that / happen)
A: off a ladder. (He / fall)