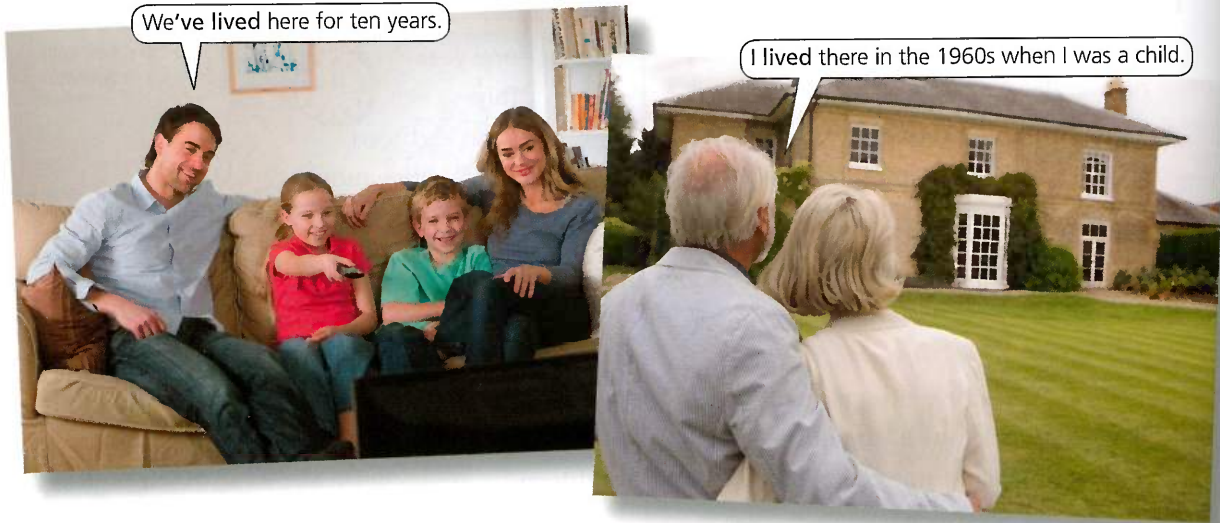


54 Present perfect or past simple?



1 Use

PRESENT PERFECT	PAST SIMPLE
<p>to talk now about finished actions in the past, when we don't know the time or it isn't important:</p> <p><i>I've been to that beach before.</i></p> <p>Timeline: A horizontal line with 'NOW' at the right end. A bracket below the line spans from the start to a point before 'NOW', labeled 'before'.</p>	<p>to talk now about finished actions that happened at a definite time in the past:</p> <p><i>I went to that beach last summer.</i></p> <p>Timeline: A horizontal line with 'NOW' at the right end. A bracket below the line spans from a point before 'NOW' to another point before 'NOW', labeled 'last summer'.</p>
<p>to talk now about situations that started in the past and are still continuing:</p> <p><i>James has worked at the gym for two years.</i></p> <p>Timeline: A horizontal line with 'NOW' at the right end. A bracket below the line spans from the start to 'NOW', labeled '2 years'.</p> <p>= He is working there now.</p>	<p>to talk now about situations that started and finished in the past:</p> <p><i>James worked at the gym for two years.</i></p> <p>Timeline: A horizontal line with 'NOW' at the right end. A bracket below the line spans from a point before 'NOW' to another point before 'NOW', labeled '2 years'.</p> <p>= He isn't working there now.</p>
<p>to talk about one or more finished actions in a time period that is still continuing:</p> <p><i>We've had three yoga lessons this month.</i></p> <p>Timeline: A horizontal line with 'NOW' at the right end. Three downward arrows point to the line, labeled 'this month'.</p>	<p>to talk about finished actions in a time period that is past:</p> <p><i>We had three yoga lessons in July.</i></p> <p>Timeline: A horizontal line with 'NOW' at the right end. Three downward arrows point to the line, labeled 'July' and 'August'.</p>
<p>with time expressions: <i>ever, never, just, yet, already, since, for, this week/month/year</i></p>	<p>with time expressions: <i>yesterday, in the summer/June/2007, ago, last week/month/year, for</i></p>

⚠ It is sometimes difficult to hear /v/ in *I've, we've, you've, they've* and /s/ in *he's* and *she's*.

PAST SIMPLE *I finished work.* *He started early.* *We carried the bags.*
 PRESENT PERFECT *I've finished work.* *He's started early.* *We've carried the bags.*

The other words around the verb can usually help you to understand which form you hear:
I finished work an hour ago.
I've finished my work.

🔊 Pronunciation ▶ 1.20