36 Present perfect for past experiences and present results

1 Form

We form the present perfect with *have* + past participle. The regular past participle ends in *-ed* (e.g. *finished*):

POSITIVE	*I have ('ve) finished.* *She has ('s) gone.* *They have ('ve) broken it.*
NEGATIVE	*I have not (haven't) finished.* *He has not (hasn't) gone.* *We have not (haven't) broken it.*
QUESTIONS	*Have you finished? (Yes, I have.)* *Has he gone? (No, he hasn't.)* *Where have you been?*

> **Have you driven** an automatic car before?
>
> No, I **haven't**.
>
> OK, I'll explain how it works.

NATURAL ENGLISH In speech and informal writing, we usually use short forms of *has/have* in positive and negative statements:
*I've finished. She **hasn't** gone.*

🔊 **Pronunciation ➤ 1.17**

Many common past participles are irregular.

Irregular verbs ➤ page 348

	INFINITIVE	PAST PARTICIPLE
regular	*play use visit want*	*played used visited wanted*
irregular	*be break come drive* *eat go have*	*been broken come driven* *eaten gone had*

⚠ There is a difference in meaning between *been* and *gone*:
*My parents **have gone** to New York on holiday.* (= They are there now.)
*My parents **have been** to New York.* (= They have visited it in the past, and have returned home.)

2 Past experiences

We use the present perfect to talk about actions and experiences that have happened in our lives up to now:
*Have you **driven** an automatic car before? I've **travelled** a lot.*
*My father **has worked** for several different companies.*

We can use expressions like *often, once, twice* or *several times* to say 'how often':
*I've eaten in that restaurant **several times**. My parents have visited Canada **twice**.*

3 *ever, never, before*

We often use *ever* to ask questions about past experiences. It means 'in your life':
*Have you **ever** driven a truck? Has Kemal **ever** been to an opera?*

We use *never* in negative sentences. It means 'not in your life':
*I've **never** swum with dolphins. Caroline's **never** eaten Chinese food.*

⚠ We put *ever* and *never* before the past participle:
✗ ~~Have you been ever to California?~~
✓ *'Have you **ever been** to California?' 'No. I've **never been** there.'*