

4 Compare these sentences.

*I **lived** in Rome.* (But not any more.)
*I **ve lived** in Rome, Paris, and New York.* (I know all these cities now.)
*I **ve been living** in New York for ten years.* (And I'm living there now.)
*She's **been married** three times.* (She's still alive.)
*She **was married** three times.* (She's dead.)
***Did** you **see** the Renoir exhibition?* (It's finished now.)
***Have** you **seen** the Renoir exhibition?* (It's still on.)
*It **snowed** yesterday.* (= past time)
*It's **been snowing**.* (There's snow still on the ground.)

2.2 Present Perfect Simple and Continuous

Present Perfect Simple and Continuous have three main uses.

1 Unfinished past

The verb action began in the past and continues to the present. It possibly goes on into the future, as well.

*We **ve lived** in this house for 20 years.*
*I **ve been** a teacher for five years.*
*I **ve been working** at the same school all that time.*

Notes

- There is sometimes little or no difference between the simple and the continuous.

*I **ve played** tennis since I was a kid.*
*I **ve been playing** tennis since I was a kid.*

- The continuous can sometimes suggest a more temporary situation. The simple can sound more permanent.

*I **ve been living** with a host family for six weeks.*
*The family **have lived** in this castle for centuries.*

- Certain verbs always suggest duration, e.g. *wait, rain, snow, learn, sit, lie, play, stay*. They are often found in the continuous.

*It's **been raining** all day.*
*She's **been sitting** reading for hours.*

- Remember that state verbs rarely take the continuous.

*I **ve known** Joan for years.* ~~**I've been knowing*~~
*How long **have** you **had** that car?* ~~**have you been having*~~

2 Present result

The verb action happened in the past, usually the recent past, and the results of the action are relevant now.

*You **ve changed**.* What **have** you **done** to yourself?
*I **ve lost** some weight.*
*I **ve been doing** a lot of exercise.*

In this use, the simple emphasizes the completed action. The continuous emphasizes the activity over a period of time.

Notes

- Certain verbs always suggest a short action, e.g. *start, find, lose, begin, stop, break, die, decide, cut*. They are more often found in the simple.

*I **ve broken** a tooth.*
*I **ve cut** my finger.*

In the continuous, these verbs suggest a repeated activity.

*I **ve been cutting** wood.*
*You **ve been losing** everything lately. What's the matter with you?*

- The use of the simple suggests a completed action.

*I **ve painted** the bathroom.*

The use of the continuous suggests a possibly incomplete action.

*I'm tired because I **ve been working**.* (Finished? Not finished?)
*Someone's **been eating** my chocolates.* (There are some left.)

- The continuous can be used to describe an activity without further details.

*'Why are you wet?' 'I **ve been swimming**.'*
*'Why are you out of breath?' 'I **ve been running**.'*

The simple sounds quite wrong in this use.

~~**I've swum.*~~ ~~**I've run.*~~

- Sometimes there is little difference between the Past Simple and the Present Perfect.

Where | ***did** you **put** my keys?*
 | ***have** you **put** my keys?*

3 Indefinite past

The verb action happened at an unspecified time in the past. The time isn't important. We are focusing on the experience.

***Have** you ever **eaten** crocodile meat?*
*She's never **been** abroad.*
***Have** you ever **been flying** in a plane when it's hit turbulence?*

Note

- Notice these two sentences.

*She's **been** to Spain.* (At some time in her life.)
*She's **gone** to Spain.* (And she's there now.)

Unit 3

3.1 Narrative tenses

Past Simple and Present Perfect

The Past Simple differs from all three uses of the Present Perfect.

- The Past Simple refers to **finished past**.

*Shakespeare **wrote** plays.* (He's dead.)
*I **ve written** a few short stories.* (I'm alive.)

- There is **no present result**.

*I **hurt** my back.* (But it's better now.)
*I **ve hurt** my back.* (And it hurts now.)

- It refers to definite past.

I saw him | ***last night. two weeks ago.***
 | ***on Monday. at 8.00.***

Compare this with the indefinite adverbials found with the Present Perfect.

I've seen him | ***recently. before. since January.***
I haven't seen him | ***yet. for months.***
I've | ***never*** | *seen him.*
 | ***just***

Note

Even without a past time adverbial, we can imagine a past time.

***Did** you **have** a good journey?* (The journey's over. You're here now.)
*Thank you for supper. It **was** lovely.* (The meal is finished.)

Past Simple

The Past Simple is used:

- to express a finished action in the past.

*Columbus **discovered** America in 1492.*