

1 Simple present perfect tense is a verb phrase made from a present form of auxiliary *have* and a past participle.

2 Auxiliary *have* has the same forms as verb *have*. The two are identical except that the auxiliary more readily joins with pronouns and with *not* to form contractions.

a. Present

PERSON	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1	I've	we've
2	← you've →	
3	he's she's it's	they've

b. Past

PERSON	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1	I'd	we'd
2	← you'd →	
3	he'd she'd it'd	they'd

c. These contractions are never used as the last word in a sentence or before *too* or *either* in a compound sentence (IX, 5).

d. The negative contractions are *haven't*, *hasn't*, *hadn't*.

3 Past participles are regularly the same as past tense verb forms. About fifty irregular verbs have special past participle forms, most of which end in *en*. These are listed in VII, 4.

4 Time expressions are not essential. Those used with simple present perfect indicate duration or unspecified past time. Specific past times are never stated with simple present perfect tense.

5 Sentence patterns

SUBJECT	VERB			COMPLEMENT		
	Aux	Mod	PP	O	P	T
a. Professor Allen	has		tried	different methods.		
b. Miss Liu	has	already	taken	Professor Allen's course.		
She	hasn't		mastered	the patterns		yet.
c. She	has		lived		here	for six months.
She	has		lived		here	since September.

- 6** **Uses.** Simple present perfect in the main clause of a sentence signals one of the following meanings:
- a. An action or state which was repeated in the past and which may be repeated in the future.
 - b. An action or state completed at some unspecified past time. Sentences of this type may include words like *just*, *already*, *recently*. Negative statements of this type often include the word *yet*.
 - c. An action or state which began some time in the past and has continued to the moment of speaking. This kind of sentence usually includes a time expression introduced by *for* or *since*.
- 7** *For* and *since* expressions fit into the usual time positions.
- a. *For* introduces phrases of duration as explained in VIII, 12. The actual length of time is stated: *for six months*.
 - b. *Since* phrases name the beginning of the time duration. The end is the moment of speaking. *Since September* means from September until now.
 - c. *Since* clauses name an action which occurred at the beginning of the time duration: *since she arrived*. The end of the duration is the moment of speaking or writing.
- 8** *Just*, *recently*, *already*, and *yet* often occur in the position of the frequency adverbs (IV, 2), between the auxiliary and the main verb. This is the only position for *just*; the others may occur at the end. *Yet*, which is used only in questions and negative statements, usually comes at the end.
- a. *Just* means immediately before speaking. *negative*
 - b. *Recently* is within a short time past.
 - c. *Already* emphasizes the completion of an action at a time sooner than expected by the hearer.
 - d. *Yet*, with a negative, suggests a time later than expected.

9 Present perfect

She has already taken Professor Allen's course.

(Implication: Her present performance in English should reflect that recent past event.)

Professor Allen has tried several different methods of teaching verb tenses.

(Implication: He will continue to try new methods.)

Many facts may be stated in either tense, but the implications differ.

vs. Simple past

Miss Liu came here six months ago.

(Simple statement of fact. No implication for the present.)

She took Professor Allen's course last semester.

(Simple statement of fact. No implication for the present.)

Professor Allen tried several different methods of teaching verb tenses.

(Implication: He is not going to try any more methods.)

Compare

10 Continuous present perfect verb phrases have three parts: a present form of auxiliary *have* plus *been* plus *ing*-form.

11 Time expressions are essential with this tense as with the continuous past (IX, 2). They are phrases or clauses of duration introduced by *for* or *since* (§ 7) or less specific expressions of recent time such as *this week, today, recently*.

12 Sentence patterns

Q-PHRASE	AUX (NOT)	S	V			C		
			Aux	Been	ing	O	P	T
		Miss Liu	has	been	living			in a private room since she arrived.
	Has	Miss Liu		been	living			in a private room since she arrived?
How long	has	Miss Liu		been	living			in a private room?
		Some students	have	been	helping	her		with her lessons recently.

- 13 Use.** The continuous tenses emphasize duration and this one is no exception. The continuous present perfect also often implies that the action or state will continue for some time in the future. Verbs not used in the other continuous tenses (III, 8) are not used in this one either.

14 Simple present perfect

Professor Allen has taught
in many foreign countries.
(repeated, completed activity)

It has rained every day this
week.
(repeated, completed occurrence)

vs. Continuous present perfect

Professor Allen has been teaching
foreign students for about six years.
(uninterrupted activity)

It has been raining all morning.
(continuous occurrence)

There is really not a great deal of difference in meaning between these two tenses. The continuous emphasizes duration, whereas the simple perfect focuses on repetition and/or completion. Many of the statements in this lesson could be expressed in either tense without anyone's noticing the difference.

15 Pronunciation helps: a common error to avoid

When sentences have verb constructions beginning with *has* or *have*, the subject is often joined to the auxiliary in the form of a contraction. Native speakers frequently speak quite fast and slur over certain sounds so that it is difficult for a learner to hear the 've of *have* or the 's of *has* unless he is especially listening for it. In your own speech be careful to pronounce these sounds distinctly so that when you write you won't make the mistake of leaving them out. In other words, never say or write *we been working* for *we've been working* or *they been studying* for *they've been studying*, even though you may think you hear it.