

# 10 Past Simple or Present Perfect (2); ago, for, since

Compare the Past Simple and the Present Perfect:

## Past Simple

## Present Perfect

- 1** Look at this example of the Past Simple:  
*There were many earthquakes last century.*  
 past now  
last century  
 Note that **last century** is a period of past time. It ended before now.
- Look at this example of the Present Perfect:  
*There have been many earthquakes this century.*  
 past now  
this century  
 Note that **this century** is a period of time that includes now (the time of speaking).

- 2** We use the Past Simple to talk about events or situations in a period of past time:  
 A: *How long did you work in your last job?*  
 B: *I worked there for four years.*  
*Did you go to the cinema last week?*  
*Sheila did not go to work yesterday.*  
 We use the Past Simple for events in the lifetime of someone who is dead:  
 A: *Did your grandmother ever visit Canada?*  
 B: Yes, she *spent* several holidays there.
- We use the Present Perfect for events or situations in a period of time that includes now:  
 A: *How long have you worked here?*  
 B: *I've worked here since last summer.*  
*(I still work here.)*  
*Have you been to the cinema this week?*  
*Sheila has not gone to work today.*  
 We use the Present Perfect for events in the lifetime of a living person:  
 A: *Have you ever visited Canada?*  
 B: Yes, I've *had* several holidays there.

- 3** Notice how a sentence with the Past Simple and one with the Present Perfect can give similar information from different points of view. Notice the use of **ago**, **for** and **since**:

*Pam went to live in Dublin 5 years ago.*

*Pam has lived in Dublin for five years.*  
*Pam has lived in Dublin since her wedding.*  
*(or ... since she got married.)*

(For more details about **ago**, **for** and **since**, see unit 41.)

## Practice

- A** Complete the sentences with the Past Simple or the Present Perfect of the verb in brackets.

0 (be) There were a lot of accidents last year, and there have been a lot this year, too.

0 (see) I have not seen Jane today, but I saw her yesterday.

1 (win) Our team is very good. We \_\_\_\_\_ two competitions last year, and we \_\_\_\_\_ two this year as well.

2 (make) The factory \_\_\_\_\_ more than 1,000 motorbikes this year; it \_\_\_\_\_ not \_\_\_\_\_ so many last year.

3 (be) I'm worried about Mary. She \_\_\_\_\_ ill last week, and she \_\_\_\_\_ ill most of this week as well.

4 (work) Joe \_\_\_\_\_ not \_\_\_\_\_ hard last month, but he \_\_\_\_\_ hard this month.

5 (earn) I \_\_\_\_\_ a lot of money this year - much more than I \_\_\_\_\_ last year.



6 (rain) It \_\_\_\_\_ not \_\_\_\_\_ much last year here, and it \_\_\_\_\_ not \_\_\_\_\_ much this year, either.

B In the brackets, the first year is when the person was born. If there is a second year, it is when the person died. Put the verbs into the Past Simple or the Present Perfect.

0 Susan Cowley (1947– ) is an artist. She has painted (paint) in many different styles and she has had (have) exhibitions in 14 countries.

1 Timothy Spinks (1846–1927) was a biologist. He \_\_\_\_\_ (study) the plants of New Zealand, and he \_\_\_\_\_ (write) several books on biology.

2 Claire Fox (1957– ) is a doctor. She \_\_\_\_\_ (develop) new treatments for several diseases, and she \_\_\_\_\_ (make) several TV programmes about medicine.

3 Catherine Knight (1824–1883) was a nurse. She \_\_\_\_\_ (work) mainly with soldiers, and she \_\_\_\_\_ (spend) most of her life trying to improve their lives.

4 Steven Brock (1963– ) is a golf player. He \_\_\_\_\_ (win) several competitions, and he \_\_\_\_\_ (earn) a lot of money from advertising different products.

C Use the words in brackets to express the same information from a different point of view. Use the Present Perfect or the Past Simple.

0 Ben stopped smoking five years ago.  
(not/smoke/for) Ben hasn't smoked for five years.

0 Jane has lived in Bristol for two years.  
(move/to/ago) Jane moved to Bristol two years ago.

1 Anna and John moved to London after their wedding.  
(live/in/since) \_\_\_\_\_

2 Mary started working in France 6 months ago.  
(work/for) \_\_\_\_\_

3 Pam stopped playing tennis when she was 15.  
(not/play/since) \_\_\_\_\_

4 Fred hasn't eaten meat for 2 years.  
(stop/eating/ago) \_\_\_\_\_

D Summary exercise: study units 9 and 10, before you do this exercise.

Use the words in brackets, and put them in the gaps in the Past Simple or the Present Perfect.

Policeman: Mr. Leach, how many times 0 have you been (you/be) in prison?

Jim Leach: Twice.

Policeman: When 1 \_\_\_\_\_ (you/finish) your last prison sentence?

Jim Leach: I 2 \_\_\_\_\_ (come) out of prison about 6 months ago.

Policeman: How long 3 \_\_\_\_\_ (you/live) in this town?

Jim Leach: About 7 years. I 4 \_\_\_\_\_ (move) here when I got married.

Policeman: So you 5 \_\_\_\_\_ (be) married for seven years.

Jim Leach: No, my wife 6 \_\_\_\_\_ (leave) me two years ago.

Policeman: 7 \_\_\_\_\_ (you/see) her in the last few weeks?

Jim Leach: No, she 8 \_\_\_\_\_ (phone) me a few days ago. I 9 \_\_\_\_\_ (meet) her once about a year ago, but I 10 \_\_\_\_\_ (not/see) her since then.