

Lesson Plan: Present perfect vs. simple past 2

Level	Intermediate (B1–B2)
Time	60–75 minutes
Skills	Grammar, speaking, writing
Focus	Choosing between present perfect and simple past; time expressions

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Distinguish between the present perfect and simple past in context
- Use correct time expressions with each tense (yet, already, just, ever, never vs. yesterday, last week, in 2020)
- Explain why the present perfect is used when there is no specific past time
- Correct common tense errors in speaking and writing

TARGET LANGUAGE (EXAMPLES)

Present perfect

- I've just finished the report.
- Have you ever been to Japan?
- She hasn't called yet.
- They've already left.

Simple past

- I finished the report yesterday.
- Did you go to Japan in 2019?
- She didn't call last night.
- They left at 3 o'clock.

Key time expressions

- Present perfect: just, yet, already, ever, never, recently, so far, this week
- Simple past: yesterday, last week/month/year, in [year], ago, when I was...

Common errors

- I have seen him yesterday. → I saw him yesterday.
- Did you ever try sushi? → Have you ever tried sushi?

LESSON PROCEDURE

1. Warm-up (10 min)

Task: Students write 3 questions to ask a partner using ever.

- Elicit present perfect naturally before addressing any errors.

2. Presentation (15 min)

Task: Timeline approach: show how the present perfect links past to present.

- Use contrast sentences to show why tense choice matters.
- Highlight: the present perfect focuses on the result or experience; past simple focuses on when.

3. Guided practice (10 min)

Task: Choose the correct tense and justify the choice.

- 'Have you seen / Did you see the news this morning?'
- 'He lived / has lived in Paris for three years before moving to London.'

4. Communicative task (20 min)

Task: Interview: life experiences.

- Students interview each other about travel, food, and achievements.
- Follow-up questions: 'When did you go?' should trigger a natural shift to simple past.

5. Error correction (5–10 min)

Task: Students spot 6 tense errors in a short paragraph.

EXTENSION / HOMEWORK

Choose one:

1. Write about 3 experiences you have had and include past simple details for each.
2. Write a short news item about something that has happened recently, using both tenses.
3. Correct 8 tense errors in a paragraph that mixes present perfect and simple past.