

Present Perfect or Past Simple - Comparison

What is the difference between the present perfect and past simple tenses in English?

This table gives a summary of the main differences.

Present Perfect	Past Simple
Life experiences if you do not say when something happened • I've tried sushi before. • Has he been to Canada?	Life experiences if you say or ask when something happened • I tried sushi for the first time last night. • When did he go to Canada?
Life experiences when the person is still alive • I've been to Paris several times.	Life experiences when the person is dead • Vincent van Gogh went to Paris several times.
Unfinished actions that started in the past and continue to the present • I've lived in the country for two years. I really like it.	Finished actions • I lived in the country for two years. Now I live in a big city.
Actions in an unfinished time period • I've worked a lot today. Note: You can also use the past simple if the time period is almost finished.	Actions with a finished time word • I worked a lot yesterday.
Recent actions with a present result • I've lost my phone, so I can't contact anyone. Note: In American English, it is common to use the past simple here.	Actions with no result on the present • I lost my phone last week, so I bought a new one on Friday.

Note: There are some other uses of the present perfect and the past simple.

Full explanation of the present perfect: [learnenglishgrammar.com/present-perfect-use/](https://www.learnenglishgrammar.com/present-perfect-use/)

Full explanation of the past simple: [learnenglishgrammar.com/past-simple-use/](https://www.learnenglishgrammar.com/past-simple-use/)