<https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/writingcenter/grammar/verbtenses#s-lg-box-10891570>

**Simple Past Versus the Present Perfect**

Rules for the use of the present perfect differ slightly in British and American English. Researchers have also found that among American English writers, sometimes individual preferences dictate whether the simple past or the present perfect is used. In other words, one American English writer may choose the simple past in a place where another American English writer may choose the present perfect.

Keep in mind, however, that the simple past is used for a completed action.  It often is used with signal words or phrases such as "yesterday," "last week," "1 year ago," or "in 2015" to indicate the specific time in the past when the action took place.

* I **went** to China *in 2010*.
* He **completed**the employee performance reviews *last month*.

The present perfect focuses more on an action that occurred without focusing on the specific time it happened. Note that the specific time is not given, just that the action has occurred.

* I **have travelled** to China.

The present perfect focuses more on the result of the action.

* He **has completed** the employee performance reviews.

The present perfect is often used with signal words such as "since," "already," "just," "until now," "(not) yet," "so far," "ever," "lately," or "recently."

* I **have *already* travelled** to China.
* He **has *recently* completed**the employee performance reviews.
* Researchers **have used** this method ***since*** it was developed.

**Summary of English Verb Tenses**

**The 12 main tenses:**

* **Simple present**: She ***writes*** every day.
* **Present progressive:** She ***is writing*** right now.
* **Simple past**: She ***wrote*** last night.
* **Past progressive:** She ***was writing*** when he called.
* **Simple future**: She ***will write*** tomorrow.
* **Future progressive:** She ***will be writing*** when you arrive.
* **Present perfect**: She ***has written*** Chapter 1.
* **Present perfect progressive:** She ***has been writing*** for 2 hours.
* **Past perfect:** She ***had*** ***written*** Chapter 3 before she started Chapter 4.
* **Past perfect progressive:** She ***had been writing*** for 2 hours before her friends arrived.
* **Future perfect:** She ***will have written*** Chapter 4 before she writes Chapter 5.
* **Future perfect progressive:** She ***will have been writing*** for 2 hours by the time her friends come over.