

*QualityTime-ESL presents...*



## QT-ESL Podcast No. 6

### Simple Past vs. Present Perfect

Hi! I am Marianne Raynaud, and I am here to help you improve your level of spoken English. Today, we will be working on the Simple Past versus the Present Perfect. If you don't know the meaning of the words we use, please stop and look them up in your dictionary.

When we talk about an event in the past, the simple past is used much more often than the present perfect. Whenever there is an indication of a precise moment in the past through a time, date, place or circumstance that refers to the past, then we use the simple past. In fact, if in doubt, chose the simple past.

*Here are words suggesting a point in time that are usually associated with the simple past. Listen and repeat.*

Yesterday

Last week

*Go on repeating.*

Last year

At 2 o'clock

When I was young

When they shouted

Read a book.

Think about the project.

Go on a trip.

Wait for my friend.

Play the piano.

Feel afraid

*Now repeat the whole sentence.*

Yesterday I read a book.

Last week I thought about the project.

Last year I went on a trip.

At 2 o'clock I waited for my friend.

When I was young, I played the piano.

When they shouted, I felt afraid.

*Now, listen to the following examples.*

*I say: At this moment, I am reading a book.*

*You say: Yesterday I read a book.*

*I say: At this moment, I am thinking about the project.*

*You say: Yesterday, I thought about the project.*

*I say: At this moment, I am going on a trip.*

*You say: Yesterday, I went on a trip.*

*Now, you go on and do the same thing. Remember to speak BEFORE I give the right answer, and start each sentence with yesterday.*

At this moment, I am reading a book.

Yesterday, I read a book.

At this moment, I'm thinking about the project.

Yesterday, I thought about the project.

At this moment, I am going on a trip.

Yesterday, I went on a trip.

At this moment, I am waiting for my friend.

Yesterday, I waited for my friend

At this moment, I am playing the piano.

Yesterday, I played the piano.

At this moment, I feel afraid.

Yesterday, I felt afraid.

*Now, listen to the following examples.*

*I say: At this moment, I am reading a book.*

*... Yesterday*

*You say: Yesterday, I read a book.*

*I say: At this moment, I am thinking about the project.*

*... Last week*

*You say: Last week, I thought about the project.*

*I say: At this moment, I am going on a trip.*

*... Last year*

*You say: Last year, I went on a trip.*

*Now, you go on and do the same thing. Remember to speak BEFORE I give the right answer.*

At this moment I am reading a book.

...Yesterday

Yesterday, I read a book.

At this moment, I am thinking about the project.

...Last week

Last week, I thought about the project.

At this moment, I am going on a trip.

...Last year

Last year, I went on a trip.

At this moment, I am waiting for my friend.

...At 2 o'clock

At 2 o'clock, I waited for my friend.

At this moment, I am playing the piano.

...When I was young

When I was young, I played the piano.

At this moment, I feel afraid.

...When they shouted

When they shouted, I felt afraid.

*Now, let us work on the present perfect. The present perfect tense links the past and the present. It means that an action has started in the past and is continuing through the present. That is why we say: "Something has been happening for a certain length of time."*

*Now, listen and repeat the following examples.*

I have been reading a book for two hours.

I have been thinking about the project for two hours.

I have been on a trip for two hours.

I have been waiting for my friend for two hours.

I have been playing the piano for two hours.

I have been feeling afraid for two hours.

*Now, listen to the following examples.*

*I say: At this moment, I am reading a book.*

*You say: I have been reading a book for two hours.*

*I say: At this moment, I am thinking about the project.*

*You say: I have been thinking about the project for two hours.*

*I say: At this moment, I am on a trip.*

*You say: I have been on a trip for two hours.*

*Now, you go on. Remember to speak BEFORE I give the right answer.*

At this moment, I am reading a book.

I have been reading a book for two hours.

At this moment, I am thinking about the project.

I have been thinking about the project for two hours.

At this moment, I am on a trip.

I have been on a trip for two hours.

At this moment, I am waiting for my friend.

I have been waiting for my friend for two

At this moment, I am playing the piano.

I have been playing the piano for two hours.

At this moment, I feel afraid.

I have been feeling afraid for two hours.

*The present perfect is often used in questions starting with “How long...?” Now listen and repeat the following examples.*

How long have you been reading?  
How long have you been thinking about the project?

How long have you been waiting?  
How long have you been playing the piano?  
How long have you been living here?  
How long have you been feeling afraid?

*Now, you will ask the questions. Listen to the following examples.*

*I say: ...reading*

*You say: How long have you been reading?*

*I say: ...thinking about the project*

*You say: How long have you been thinking about the project?*

*I say: ...waiting*

*You say: How long have you been waiting?*

*Now you go on and do the same thing. Remember to speak BEFORE I give the right answer.*

...reading

...thinking about the project

...waiting

...playing the piano

...living here

...feeling afraid

How long have you been reading?

How long have you been thinking about the project?

How long have you been waiting?

How long have you been playing the piano?

How long have you been living here?

How long have you been feeling afraid?

*These sentences are a bit difficult because we are using the continuous form. We are saying, “I **have been reading**” and not the simple form “I **have read**.” The continuous form is the one used the most in conversation when we want to say the action is continuing from the past into the present.*

*Now let us use the different persons. For example:*

*I say: I...*

*I say: He...*

*I say: We...*

*You say: I have been reading a book for two hours.*

*You say: He has been reading a book for two hours.*

*You say: We have been reading a book for two hours.*

*Now, you go on and do the same thing. Remember to speak BEFORE I give the right answer.*

I have been reading a book for two hours.

He has been reading a book for two hours.

We have been reading a book for two hours.

She has been reading a book for two hours.

They have been reading a book for two hours.

You have been reading a book for two hours.

...He

...We

...She

...They

...You

*Now, just listen and repeat:*

How long have I been working on these exercises? I have been working for more than ten minutes. I have been repeating and transforming sentences. Before, I thought I could not learn to speak English. Now, I realize that learning a language is like learning a sport. In a sport, you have to practice the same movements again and again until you perform them perfectly. In language learning, it is the same thing. You have to practice, repeating and transforming words and structures until you know them perfectly. It takes time, but I know I am working hard at the present moment, and I will, little by little, master the English language.

*That is the end of today’s podcast. We will soon be back with more exercises and short texts to repeat. Thank you all for listening. Bye for now, and don’t forget to keep smiling!*