

## PRESENT PERFECT (SIMPLE)



### A Present Perfect Review

As we've already seen several times since we started our studies together, the Present Perfect **Tense** (= tempo verbal), is a very distinctive feature in the repertoire of verbal forms of the English language. It is formed by the **present form of the verb to have** (*have* or *has*) and the **past participle** (the 3<sup>rd</sup> column of irregular verbs => bring - brought - **brought** / take - took - **taken** / be - was, were - **been**, or an **-ed** form of regular verbs => call - called - **called** / love - loved - **loved** / work - worked - **worked** ).

Ex.: *I have brought an umbrella, in case it rains.*

*I've brought an umbrella ...*

*She has loved music all her life.*

*She's loved music all her life.*

It is apparently a simple thing to learn. However, Portuguese speakers generally face the following problem: is the Present Perfect a present or a past tense? Judging from the sentences above, it is mostly a past tense. This becomes more evident when we translate the sentences:

*Eu trouxe um guarda-chuva.*

*Ela gostou de música a vida toda.*

Although translating the Present Perfect literally, that is, word for word (I have brought = eu tenho trazido) may work well sometimes, it sounds obviously weird in the first example, as you can see:

*Eu tenho trazido um guarda-chuva. ☹*

The translation above sounds unnatural to Portuguese speakers. This situation will be reversed, nevertheless, if we say:

*I've brought an umbrella everyday this week, because every morning it looks as though it will rain.*

=

*Tenho trazido um guarda-chuva todo o dia esta semana, pois toda manhã parece que vai chover. ☺*

When we step into the world of translation, things get a little more complicated. As you can see in this example, **the Present Perfect may also be translated well by the Portuguese Present Simple Tense** (I have been = eu sou):

*I have been a translator and a teacher for 25 years.*

*Eu sou professor e tradutor há 25 anos.*

*How long have you been a doctor?*

*Há quanto tempo tu és médica?*

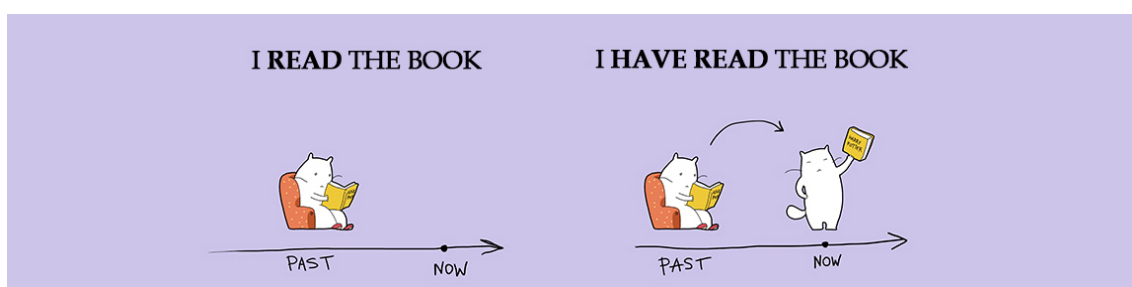
The fact of the matter is that the Present Perfect Tense is **both a present and a past tense in English**. This will, in turn, have an effect on how we translate it into Portuguese. Problems will generally start when **we translate our thoughts from Portuguese into English** (which is something we do most of the time - we actually tend to **juggle** (= fazemos malabarismos com) the two languages at the same time, constantly translating and adapting from Portuguese into English and vice-versa.



In general terms, the Present Perfect expresses a relation between the present, the "**here and now**" and the past. This could result in an **unfinished action** (*I've been an architect for ... years*) or a **present result of a past action** (the action is over, but the result is here/now => **I can see the result of my past actions** => *I've done my exercises* (= they are ready, here, in front of me), *I've read the whole book* (= I've finished reading it, and **now I know** all the story).

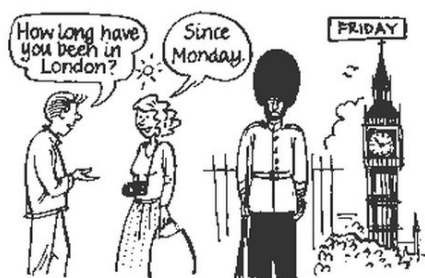


Who **has broken** the vase?



It is crucial, however, to remember that **the Present Perfect can't be used with finished past phrases, such as**

**last night, yesterday, last year** (unless you have the keywords **for** and **since**, which we'll see in more detail later).



When we state a finished past time (last night, last year...), **we must use the Simple Past with it:**

~~I've seen~~ this great film last night. ☹

I **saw** this great film last night.

I **got** my last haircut on 10 March (= 4 months ago). ☺

but:

I've seen this great film many times **since** last year. ☺

In order to review the different ways of using the Present Perfect in English, and (how this has a reflex on how we translate it into Portuguese), **we'll read a short BBC photo-article about people getting their first haircut after the COVID-19 lockdown.** The article is full of Present Perfect constructions, but as you will see, some of them express slightly different ideas, which in turn, will produce different translations in Portuguese - sometimes we'll use the past, sometimes the present, and many a times we'll use the literal translation of the Present Perfect (I have been = eu tenho estado / tenho sido).

First, **we'll read the whole article.** I've already marked all the Present Perfect sentences. Please, **find the article file now**, and have a read. Then, return here and go to the next page.

Remember that the article is annotated with vocabulary explanations; after you have download it, cut & past it onto your desktop. After you've done that, open it again, for the notes to work.

Now, let's check each Present Perfect sentence and their rules and possible translations into Portuguese:

1) *Hairdressers in England have re-opened for business for the first time in three months.*

RULE: Present Perfect used with the phrase "**(for) the first time**". In general, when we employ this expression, we'll complete the sentence with a Present Perfect construction.

We can translate it both as present or past in Portuguese:

- ⇒ *Os cabeleireiros na Inglaterra reabriram pela primeira vez em três meses.*
- ⇒ *Os cabeleireiros na Inglaterra reabrem pela primeira vez em três meses.*

TIP: next time you use the phrase **the first time**, try using the Present Perfect and see if it works.

Ex: *This is the first time I've tried Mexican food.*

*This is the first time I've read 'Romeo and Juliet'.*



2) *The hairdresser has done a great job.*

RULE: **Present result** (a good job = I can see this now) of a **single** past action (the man probably got his hair cut a little before, or maybe earlier **on the same day**).

Translation: Only the past works well here in Portuguese.

⇒ *A cabeleireira fez um excelente trabalho* (=> como se pode ver).

3) *I've been desperate for a cut and have been pre-booked since June.*

RULE: Unfinished action with **for** / **since**. Our keyword here is **since**, which when paired up with the Present Perfect express the idea of an **action that is either not finished, or that has just finished** (in this case, the man has just got a haircut, but he's been waiting for **this since June**).

Translation: Here we can use the phrases "tenho estado/andado" in Portuguese, and also the present or the past in the second part of the sentence.

⇒ *Tenho estado/andado desesperado por um corte de cabelo e estou/estava com horário marcado desde Junho.*

4) *I have had no worries about coming along as there is lots of information about keeping safe.*

RULE: the Present Perfect is used here to express no concerns or worries about a **past action** (coming here - the man came to the shop earlier, that is **before now**) **with a strong relation with the present** (= coming along **here** = he is probably being interviewed **in** the shop). This relation with the present is reinforced by his saying "as **there is** lots of information", which is a Present Simple form.

Translation: We can use the Simple Past here.

⇒ *Não fiquei nem um pouco preocupado de vir aqui, pois há muita informação [disponível] sobre como se manter em segurança.*

5) *My hair has become increasingly annoying.*

RULE: Her hair **is annoying her now**, because it is too long (= she's probably waiting to have her hair cut, so she hasn't had it cut yet). This is a common use of the phrase **has become** => to express a **present result** of a process that has been taking place.

Translation: We can use both the present and the construction "tem me incomodado".

⇒ Meu cabelo **tem me incomodado** cada vez mais.

⇒ Meu cabelo **está ficando** cada vez pior.

6) *I have been working throughout and don't know anyone who has caught it.*

RULE: This sentence has two different uses of the Present Perfect: the first is a Present Perfect **Continuous** (have been + **working**), which expresses an **unfinished action** (I've been working) and the second is a Present Perfect **Simple** (no verb with an ~~ING~~), where **the present evidence/result** (I don't know **now**) of the **past** (anyone who **has caught** it) is expressed.

Translation: In both parts of the sentence we can use the Portuguese TER + PARTICIPLE => tenho trabalhado / tenha pegado

⇒ *Tenho trabalhado todo o tempo* (throughout = desde o início do lockdown) *and não conheço ninguém que tenha pegado* [o coronavírus].

7) *I've had it up to hide my roots.*

RULE: This is another case of an **unfinished action** (= the woman is still waiting to get her hair cut), or an **action that has just occurred** (she's **just** had her hair cut, so technically, the action is not even past yet).

Translation:

⇒ *Tenho usado o cabelo preso no alto para esconder as raízes.*

8) *My hair has been driving me mad, it's been 17 or 18 weeks since I had it cut.*

RULE: another unfinished action (Present Perfect Continuous again, with ING), where our keyword is **since** once more (it's been 17 or 18 weeks **since**).

Translation: We can use the literal translation of the Present Perfect here (tem me deixado maluco) for the first part, and the present for the second (já são 17 ou 18 semanas desde que)

⇒ *Meu cabelo tem me deixado maluco, já são/faz 17 ou 18 semanas desde que eu cortei* [pela última vez].

9) *My housemates have been cutting it.*

RULE: Unfinished repeated action that is still going on. His friends have been cutting his hair since the beginning of the lockdown.

Translation: Again we can use the literal translation of the Present Perfect.

⇒ *Meus colegas de apartamento têm cortado* [meu cabelo].



10) *We've all done each other's now. I've cut about four people's hair but I've been looking forward to a proper cut.*

RULE: There are three variations of the Present Perfect in these sentences:

- a) Present evidence of something in the past (we've all done each other's **NOW**).
- b) Past experience (this is when we narrate something we've already done, which is usually connected with the word "**já**" in Portuguese, as in "**já** cortei o cabelo de cerca de 4 pessoas").
- c) Unfinished action (Present Perfect Continuous): **I've been looking** forward to a proper cut - he's still waiting and he's just about to get his hair cut.

Translation: Each of the Present Perfect forms in these sentences will be translated differently.

⇒ *Nós todos já cortamos os cabelos uns dos outros, agora. Eu já cortei o cabelo de cerca de 4 pessoas, e tenho esperado ansiosamente para fazer um corte de verdade mesmo [profissional].*

11) *It's been horrible not to have my hair cut, it's been hard to keep it under control.*

RULE: Unfinished action again.

Translation: once more we can use "tem sido" or the present (está).

⇒ *Tem sido horrível não poder cortar meu cabelo, tem sido (está) difícil de mantê-lo sob controle.*

12) *I've been coming here for 40 years.*

RULE: Present Perfect Continuous = unfinished action with the keyword **for** (this is similar to the previous sentences with the keyword **since**).

Translation: We can use the present here or "tenho vindo".

- ⇒ *Eu venho aqui há 40 anos.*
- ⇒ *Faz 40 anos que venho aqui.*
- ⇒ *Tenho vindo aqui por 40 anos.*

13) *So today, I'm looking forward to it and have treated myself to a cut with the head barber*

RULE: Present Perfect for something that has happened earlier **TODAY**. Our keyword here is **TODAY**. This emphasizes the **present aspect of the Present Perfect**, as present adverbials such as **today, this month, this year, this morning**, all express the idea of an unfinished time, which is just ideal for the Present Perfect.



Translation: Although this use of the Present Perfect is strongly related to the present in English, paradoxically, we can translate "**I've treated myself to a cut**" with the past form "**me dei de presente**" in Portuguese.

- ⇒ *Então, HOJE, estou ansioso por um corte de cabelo e me dei de presente este corte com o barbeiro.*

So, this is it for today! Time to have a rest...

