

Present perfect questionnaire (basic)

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Last updated: October 24, 2017

★ **Note:** This questionnaire is not intended for languages that have, or might have, perfect of evidentiality (Izvorski 1997).

The basic contrast we are interested in: Is it more natural to use the present perfect or the simple past (or potentially some other expression) when saying the following expressions? Do any of these contexts require the use of one versus the other? Is the present perfect infelicitous in any of these contexts?

(1) **Present perfect puzzle context (Klein 1992)**

You watched Usain Bolt run a race yesterday. Today, you are telling a friend about the race. You say:

‘Usain Bolt (has) ran yesterday.’

Can you say this with the present perfect?

(2) **Current relevance (McCoard 1978)**

You have been studying the history of the art of printing. You are telling a friend about how Gutenberg discovered the art of printing. You say:

‘Gutenberg (has) discovered/invented the art of printing.’

Can you say this with the present perfect?

(3) **Perfect of result (Iatridou et al. 2001)**

a. **Perfect of result context**

Your roommate Ali tells you that he can’t find his keys. You haven’t seen them either. You say:

‘Ali (has) lost his keys.’

Can you say this with the present perfect?

- b. Updated perfect of result context**
Then, Ali checks a pocket he hadn't looked in before and finds them.
You say:
'Ali (has) lost his keys, but now he found them.'
Can you say the present perfect in the first clause with this continuation?
 - (4) Lifetime effects context (Chomsky 1970)**
You visit Princeton and see Einstein's signature in the physics department guestbook. You say:
'Einstein (has) visited Princeton.'
Can you say this with the present perfect?
 - (5) Universal perfect (McCawley 1981)**
 - a. Universal perfect context**
You are telling someone about your neighbor Ali. Ali has lived in Los Angeles since 2012. You say:
'Ali (has) lived in Los Angeles since 2012, and he lives there today.'
Can you say the present perfect in the first clause with (and without) this continuation?
 - b. Updated universal perfect context**
You are telling someone about your former neighbor Sarah, who moved to Los Angeles in 2012 but then moved away to Arizona. You say:
'Sarah (has) lived in Los Angeles since 2012, but she doesn't live there anymore.'
Can you say the present perfect in the first clause with (and without) this continuation?
 - (6) Repeatability effects (Katz 2003)**
 - a. Repeatability context**
You are discussing the Picasso exhibit at LACMA with your friend Ayse. You are curious if she went to see it. The Picasso exhibit is closed now; she can no longer go to it. You ask:
'Have you been to the Picasso exhibit?'
Can you say this with the present perfect? What about the simple past?

- b. **Updated repeatability context**
You are discussing the Monet exhibit at LACMA with your friend Leyla. The Monet exhibit is still open; Leyla could go to it this weekend if she wanted. You ask:
'Have you been to the Monet exhibit?'
Can you say this with the present perfect? What about the simple past?
- (7) **Present perfect and questions**
 - a. **Question about a specific past time**
Our mutual friend Seren is a somewhat picky eater. I know that you and Seren went to a Japanese restaurant last night. I ask you:
'Has Seren eaten sushi?'
Can you say this with the present perfect? What about the simple past?
 - b. **Question about the general past**
You are discussing food preferences with your co-workers. Your co-worker Ayse is notoriously picky. You ask her:
'Have you eaten sushi?'
Can you say this with the present perfect? Does it require an additional adverb, e.g. *ever*? What about the simple past?
 - c. **Out of the blue question**
Your co-worker sticks their head in your office and asks out of the blue:
'Have you eaten sushi?'
Can you say this with the present perfect? Does it require an additional adverb, e.g. *ever*? What about the simple past? Does it sound better to use the simple past, or the present perfect, in an out of the blue context?

References

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