

**UČIONICA**

# I HAVE WORKED vs I WORKED

If you had English classes at school, you probably heard of the notorious Present Perfect Tense- the one which connects present and past and is not so difficult to grasp when used alone in a sentence. But when the Past Simple Tense joins the already confusing jumble of English verb tenses, all that you thought you knew for sure flies out of the window.

The best way to learn the differences between these two tenses is by comparing their use in real-life examples. The following chart can be helpful when choosing between 'I worked for IBM' and 'I have worked for IBM'.

**PRESENT PERFECT** (I have worked)

- Used when the time period is **NOT** finished: I have lived in Zagreb all my life.
- The time of action is not specific: I've seen that movie several times. (we do not say when exactly)
- Used with: for, since, already, just, yet, ever and never when the action hasn't finished yet: Tom has worked in this department since 2002.
- Experiences: Have you ever worked abroad? I have never been to China.
- Used for a past event (usually the one that happened recently) with a present result: I've lost my report- have you seen it? We've won the contract!

**PAST TENSE** (I worked)

- Used when the time period **IS** finished: I lived in Zagreb until I was ten and then I moved to Split.
- The time of action is clear and definite: I saw that movie last month.
- Used with: yesterday, last Friday/month/year, in 1998, two months ago, etc. when the action happened in the past and is finished: In the 1970s Samsung invested in heavy industries.
- Telling a story, a series of completed actions: Jenny came to her office late this morning, went straight to her assistant's office and stayed there until lunchtime.

One of the most important things to remember is the following: **do not translate sentences literally from your own language.** There is a reason why English is called a foreign language- it does not have the same grammatical rules for use of certain verb tenses nor the same notion of the world as we do. The most common mistake my students make is when they talk about their life experience and use sentences such as: 'I **live** in Zagreb for five years' or 'He **knows** his boss all his life', which are examples of literal translation from Croatian. The English prefer to connect past and present when talking about life experiences (not use the present tense only like we do- 'Živim u Zagrebu već pet godina'), therefore '**I have lived**' and '**He has known**' would be the correct options.

**1. Underline the correct words.**

- The share prices have gone up / went up by 4% yesterday.
- An accountant and a sports coach started / have started a small shoe company called Blue Ribbon in 1964.
- The European Union announced / has announced that it will provide funding for another line of the Bucharest metro.
- Our managing director has had / had an accident so we came back from our teambuilding earlier.
- Inflation has risen / rose by 2 %. Last year it was 3% and this year it is 5%.
- Their company spent / has spent €20,000 on this promotion so it'd better be successful.

Key: a) went up, b) started, c) has announced, d) had, e) has risen, f) has spent

**2. Put the verbs in brackets into either the Past Simple or the Present Perfect.**

- News is just coming in. There \_\_\_\_\_ (be) a serious earthquake in Los Angeles.
- Barbara \_\_\_\_\_ (act) in more than twenty movies during her career, but now she's retired and spends her time working for charity.
- Hanna \_\_\_\_\_ (act) in more than twenty movies, but this is her best film yet.
- A How many customers \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_ (serve) this week?  
B Oh, lots of them. On Tuesday alone we \_\_\_\_\_ (have) over 400 people in the shop.
- So far this month we \_\_\_\_\_ (have) 13,000 hits on our website.
- McDonald's \_\_\_\_\_ (open) its first foreign outlet in Richmond, Canada in 1967.
- Since the successful iPod launch, Apple \_\_\_\_\_ (focus) on expanding its range of products in the consumer electronics market.

Key: a) has been, b) acted, c) has acted, d) have (you) served,; had, e) have had, f) opened, g) has focused

**3. Read an interview between Jackie Marshall, a business journalist, and Paula Davis, a business analyst on the topic of a cosmetics company called 'BBFace'. Choose the correct tense.**

**Jackie:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Were there / Have there been) a lot of changes at BBFace since the 1980s?

**Paula:** Yes, Jackie, but most of them \_\_\_\_\_ (happened / have happened) under the leadership of Mr Frank and his successor Ms Townley who \_\_\_\_\_ (resigned / has resigned) as CEO of BBFace in 2007.

**Jackie:** What sort of changes \_\_\_\_\_ (did they make / have they made)?

**Paula:** Well, they \_\_\_\_\_ (moved / have moved) BBFace out of certain business areas such as make-up and aesthetic supplies production. The company called Vintage Beauty \_\_\_\_\_ (has bought / bought) one of their subsidiaries in 2005.

**Jackie:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Did BBFace move / Has BBFace moved) into any new areas?

**Paula:** Yes, of course. Since 2000 they \_\_\_\_\_ (took over / have taken over) five new companies in areas, developing paraben-free, soap-free products and products that include organic or natural ingredients.

Key: Have there been; happened, resigned; have (they) made; have moved, bought; has moved; have taken over



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