The Present Perfect Tense

The Mystery Tense of the English Language
The Present Perfect Tense is not easy!

- The Present Perfect Tense in English is one of those grammar structures that would not exist in languages that are designed by people.
- Unfortunately, languages evolve with use and the Present Perfect Tense has evolved into a tense that deals with three totally different segments of time that have practically nothing to do with one another.
Situation 1 to use the Present Perfect Tense

- An event begins in the past and continues up to the present moment
- Example: I have been here since 7 a.m.
- Key Words that indicate this situation:
  - since + date, for + a period of time, all + a period of time
Situation 2 to use the Present Perfect Tense

- When a portion of time is not completed
- Example: I have spoken to Lise many times this week.
- Key Words that indicate this situation:
  - today, this semester, this winter, this year
Situation 3 to use the Present Perfect Tense

- When there is an action or repeated action in the past with NO SPECIFIC time (the exact time that the event happened is NOT important)

Examples: They have moved into a new apartment. I have seen that movie 10 times.
Situation 3 to use the Present Perfect Tense (continued)

Notice how in this sense of the tense, the action can happen **one or several** times.

**Key Words that indicate this situation:**
- already, just, lately, of late, recently, always, never, yet, once, twice, three times, many times, often, several times
The Present Perfect and the Simple Past Tenses.

- These two tenses occupy a very similar place in time. It is very easy to confuse them. The major difference between them is that the Present Perfect Tense doesn't mention exact times of actions.

- The Simple Past mentions or implies an exact time of an action.
Examples of the Simple Past:

- Last month he went shopping.
- He went to Boston yesterday.
- He gave her the gift there.

Notice that the indication of time is not directly mentionned in the last sentence.
Example of the Present Perfect:

☆ He **has gone** to Boston several times.

▲ Notice that the precise time of these trips cannot be determined.
The Structure of the Present Perfect Tense.

Part One of the Tense is the present tense of the auxiliary 'to have'

- I have, You have, He She or It has, We have, You have, They have.

Part Two of the Present Perfect Tense is the Past Participle Form of the verb.
Possible Past Participle Problems

- In irregular verbs the Past Participle is often different from the Past Form of the verb.
- To run - *Ran* - *Run*,
  To begin - *Began* - *Began*,
  To eat - *Ate* - *Eaten*
Real Past Participle Problems

In regular verbs the Past Participle form of the verb and the Past Form of the verb are identical.

- To revolt - Revolted - Revolted,
- To like - Liked - Liked,
- To work - Worked - Worked
Here are declarative sentences in the Present Perfect Tense using these examples:

- He has run to the store all his life.
- He has begun to get tired of always being the one who does it.
- They have eaten well since he arrived because of all of his work.
- You have revolted everyone who has worked with you this year.
- No one has liked you since you started this project.
Why don't we put *started* into the Present Perfect Tense.

- No one **has liked** you since you *started* this project.
- The action of starting is completely in the past!
Questions in the Present Perfect

- Question word (optional) + Part 1 + Subject + Part 2 + Rest of Sentence
- Where have you gone to do the work?
- Have you gone to do the work?
- What have you done to change the situation?
- Where has he been since the accident?
- Has he been sad for a long time?
‘Who’ and ‘What’ in questions

- Note that sometimes 'Who' and 'What' can be the subject of the sentence which changes the word order.
- Who has done the work since she left?
- What has happened for all this period?
In negative sentences the word **not** goes between the Part One and the Part Two of the verb tense.

Examples: We **have not worked** there.
          She **has not liked** him since that day.

These answers can be contracted in the following way:
We **haven't worked** there.
She **hasn't liked** him since that day.