**Class 5: Present Perfect and the Use of Ago, Since and For**

* **Importance of Present Perfect**

*In academic writing, present perfect is one of the most commonly used three tenses along simple present and simple past1.*

1. **Rule of Present Perfect**

Subject + to have (in simple present) + past participle of the verb.

* Recall to have in simple present: I, You, We, You, or They have. She or He or It has.
* Recall the past participle of the verbs:
* Regular verbs: the simple past or preterit is the same as the past participle.
* Irregular verbs: There is no rule. You have to memorize the past participle of the irregular verbs you often use.
* Auxiliary verbs: to be – been; to have – had and to do- done
* Modal verbs: Not applicable. We will not discuss here the modal perfect tense (subject + modal verb + have + past participle of the verb) for making suppositions or speculations regarding a past event or action. In science, especially in biomedical research, we hypothesize based on observations or preliminary data or findings, which leaves almost no room for speculations.

Example 1: He has worked at the hospital. (A regular verb)

Example 2: He has taught English. (An irregular verb)

Example 3: We have had our books in the classroom. (Auxiliary verb to have)

Example 4: He has been an excellent student. (Auxiliary verb to be)

Example 5: He could have played soccer at the professional level. (A modal verb)

**Note:** as opposed to simple past, use the present perfect to indicate an action that occurred at a **nonspecific time** in the past.

1. **Uses of Present Perfect**

* **General Uses**

The present perfect is used to talk about experience up to now, a change that occurred over time, recent actions (often used with “just”), and unfinished action that is expected to be completed (in the negative, often with “yet”)2 with relevance in the present.

Go online for your own examples or click [here](https://www.scribbr.com/verbs/present-perfect/).

* **Uses in manuscript writing3-7**

The present perfect is used in the introduction section of a manuscript where it is often used to introduce background information in a paragraph. It is used in the discussion section to refer to findings or results from the literature (others’ results or even your previously published results). Your own results are in simple past with a mention of a table or a figure for indication or direction for the readers.

1. **Uses of Since, Ago and For with Present Perfect8**

* We use “Since” when we indicate the beginning of a specified period of time.

Example 6: My mentor has been in his current position since 2020.

* We use “For” when we are using a specific period of time: one week, three hours, five years, etc.

Example 7: My mentor has been in his current position for the last four (4) years.

* We use “Ago,” when we just refer to “some time” in the past.

Example 8: My mentor has been in his current position four (4) years ago.

**Note:** In addition to “since”, “for” and “ago”, we do use present perfect with just (meaning 'a short time before'), yet (meaning 'at any time up to now'), still (meaning something hasn't happened) and already (meaning 'before now')9. As a simple rule, place this word between the auxiliary verb to have and the past participle of the verb in your affirmative sentences.

Example 9: I have already taken my English classes 1 to 4. We will go more in detail when editing your sentences in present perfect with just, yet, still and already.

1. **Simple future**

Importantly, in addition to the three most commonly used tenses in manuscript writing (simple present, simple past, and present perfect), we will discuss here briefly simple future.

* **Simple** **future**
* **Rule**

Subject + will + base form of the verb (regular, irregular and auxiliary verbs).

Example 10: We will conduct a larger and well-designed follow up study.

Uses: We use simple future to express action in the future. In manuscript writing, we use it to express the future direction after the conclusion of the study.

* **Exceptions**

1. With modal verbs, we do not apply the above mentioned rule.

Example 11**:** We can conduct a larger and well-designed follow up study.

We will be able to conduct a larger and well-designed follow up study.

1. In British English10, we use “shall” for the subject is either first person of singular or first person of plural. I shall or we shall. In American English, we use “shall” only to express the necessity of a future action.

Example 12**:** The security will test the fire alarm system in five minutes. We shall exit the lab right now.

1. **Evaluation**
2. What is the rule of present perfect?
3. What is the main used of present perfect we covered in this class?
4. **References**
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6. Eaghan Ryan at Scribb. Present Perfect Tense | Examples & Use. Available at <https://www.scribbr.com/verbs/present-perfect/> Published on April 4, 2023, revised on May 11, 2023 and Consulted on May 22nd, 2023.

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2. University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Verb tense in scientific manuscripts. Available at <https://www.unlv.edu/sites/default/files/page_files/27/GradCollege-VerbTenseScientificManuscripts.pdf> consulted on May 20th, 2023.

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