

**THE PRESENT PERFECT**  
**or THE SIMPLE PAST TENSE?**  
(I have done *or* I did?)

**Look at these sentences :**

1. A: I **have got** through with my comprehensive exam.  
B: Oh, really? When was that?  
A: I **got** through with it last Wednesday.
2. **Have you seen** Ahmad this morning? (It is still morning).
3. **Did you see** Ahmad this morning? (It is now afternoon).

In example (1), Speaker A starts by telling about a recent happening; therefore, he uses the Present Perfect ("have got"). In answer to the question "When?", however, he uses the Simple Past ("got"). Thus the Present Perfect focuses on **WHAT** has happened, while the Simple Past tells us **WHEN** it happened. This is why the simple past tense is normally used with a time expression referring to the past. The Present Perfect does not tell us when something happened.

Examples (2) and (3) show that we use the Present Perfect when the action is related to the present, and that we use the Simple Past when the action happened in the past and has nothing to do with the present.

## **Exercise 18**

**Put the verb in parentheses into the Present Perfect or the Simple Past tense :**

1. His Eminence (work) as Chairman for about seven years so far.  
(He still works as Chairman .)
2. The nurse (give) the baby a shot two days ago.
3. A: I (read) this novel before.  
B: When?  
A: I (read) it last semester.
4. Poor Mr. X (be) in the Intensive Care Unit since the car accident (happen).
5. I (lose) my key. I can't find it anywhere.
6. You (do) your homework today?
7. You (do) your homework yesterday?
8. You (finish) your homework assignments?