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TENSES L5 – PERFEKT (German Perfect Tense)

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Video Lesson:

<https://easy-deutsch.com/yt/tensesL5/>

THE DIFFERENT TENSES FOR THE PAST

In German, we use two tenses to talk about the past: the Präteritum (simple past tense) and the Perfekt (perfect tense).

Present	Past	
Präsens (Present Tense)	Perfekt (Perfect tense)	Präteritum (Simple Past)
„Ich habe ein Auto.“	„Ich habe ein Auto gehabt .“	„Ich hatte ein Auto.“

We use the Perfekt for actions in the past that are already finished.

EXAMPLES FOR THE PERFEKT

- „Der Junge **hat** Fußball **gespielt**.“
- „Er **hat** Urlaub **gemacht**.“
- „Wir **sind** heute mit dem Zug **gefahren**.“

CONSTRUCTION

We form the Perfekt with "haben" or "sein" as an auxiliary verb and the Partizip 2 (past participle). Whether we have to use "haben" or "sein" depends on the main verb:

Person	Auxiliary Verb	Partizip 2	Auxiliary Verb	Partizip 2
ich	bin	gelaufen.	habe	gekocht.
du	bist		hast	
er/sie/es	ist		hat	
wir	sind		haben	
ihr	seid		habt	
sie/Sie	sind		haben	

Construction with "sein"

For movement or change of location (of the subject):

fahren → „Ich **bin** mit dem Bus *gefahren*.“

gehen → „Du **bist** nach Hause *gegangen*.“

There must be a movement **from point A to point B**.

„Du hast mit Martina getanzt.“ → No movement from A to B.

For a change of condition or status (of the subject):

sterben → „Er **ist** 1986 *gestorben*.“

= A change from **being alive** to **being dead**

einschlafen → „Du **bist** zeitig *eingeschlafen*.“

= A change from **awake** to **asleep**

The verbs "sein", "werden" and "bleiben" always use the auxiliary verb "sein":

„Ich **bin** in Deutschland *gewesen*.“

„Wir **sind** zu Hause *geblieben*.“

„Er **ist** ein Lehrer *geworden*.“

Construction with "haben"

We use it for all verbs that do not use "sein".

Furthermore, regardless of changes of state and location, ALL reflexive verbs use the Perfekt with "haben".

- „Sie **hat** Essen *gekocht*.“
- „Er **hat** sich auf den Film *gefreut*.“
- „Max **hat** sich in Anna *verliebt*.“

WORD ORDER

The auxiliary verb is conjugated and is therefore in position 2. The Partizip 2 (past participle) is at the end of the sentence and remains unchanged.

Normal Main Clause:

	Position 2		End
Er	hat	Essen	gekocht.

Yes/No Question:

Position 1			End
Habt	ihr	den Mann	gesehen?

Subordinate Clause:

P1		End Main Clause	Subordinate Clause
Habt	ihr	gesehen,	wann er nach Hause gegangen ist?

TASK



- If you haven't done so yet, download my vocabulary list sample for verbs.
- Make a separate list just for verbs and fill in all the columns for every single verb you learn.
- If you learn the forms together, it gets way easier! You will quickly get a feeling for the correct conjugation!

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