

Hello. I'm Margot Politis. Welcome to Study English, IELTS preparation.

Today we're taking a look at *tenses*. We'll focus on the *present perfect* and *simple past tenses*, and we'll hear examples of each.

Then, we'll practice using some *adverbs of time*.

The clip we're looking at today is about greenhouse gases. Scientists have been measuring the concentration of certain gases, stored in ice in Antarctica. Let's find out more.

The air archived in ice helps prove how much the level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere has changed in just the last two hundred years.

What we've found out is that indeed there were much lower concentrations pre-industrially, around about a third of the methane concentration that we have presently. We've seen a big increase in carbon dioxide, so the two main greenhouse gases in the atmosphere have increased.



If you look back a half a million years ago, we don't see concentrations anything like we have presently. We can link those high concentrations of the present day uniquely to activities of man - combusting of fossil fuels, clearing of lands and so on, agricultural activities.

As you know, there is a variety of verb tenses in English – *simple*, *perfect* and *continuous*.

Tenses are used to describe 'past', 'present' and 'future' actions.

Sometimes, we need to give more information about when an action happened, how long it happened for and whether it is continuing.

When an action has been completed, we use the *present perfect tense*.

Listen to Dr Etheridge use it here.

What we've found out is that indeed there were much lower concentrations pre-industrially, around about a third of the methane concentration that we have presently. We've seen a big increase in carbon dioxide, so the two main greenhouse gases in the atmosphere have increased.

Dr Etheridge uses the *present perfect tense*.

He says: 'we've found out'

He's talking about an action that has been completed.

He also says: 'we've seen', and

'greenhouse gases have increased'.

These actions started sometime in the past but have now been completed – they are in the *present perfect tense*.

When an action has only recently been completed, we can highlight this by using the *adverb* 'just'.

Listen to the reporter.

The air archived in ice helps prove how much the level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere has changed in just the last two hundred years.

She says that "The level of greenhouse gases has changed in 'just' the last two hundred years".

By using the word 'just', she is telling us that two hundred years isn't very long in geological time. It's only 'just' happened.

She's also using the *present perfect tense*.

Let's have a look at how we structure the *present perfect tense*.

We use the *auxiliary verb* 'to have' and a *past participle*.

So here's our *auxiliary verb*:

'to have' – 'I have, you have, she has, we have, they have'.

And then a *past participle* – for example:

'changed', 'found out', 'seen', 'increased' or 'helped'.

So we have:

'I have changed',

'you have found out',

'she has seen',

'we have increased',

'they have helped'.

auxiliary verb	past participle
to have	
I have	changed
you have	found out
she has	seen
we have	increased
they have	helped

Now let's take a look at the *simple past tense*.

We use the *simple past tense* when an action occurs at a particular time in the past.

For example:

'last Christmas', or

'on the 15th of May', or

'in 1979', or

'three million years ago'.



Let's listen to Dr Etheridge.

What we've found out is that indeed there were much lower concentrations pre-industrially, around about a third of the methane concentration that we have presently.

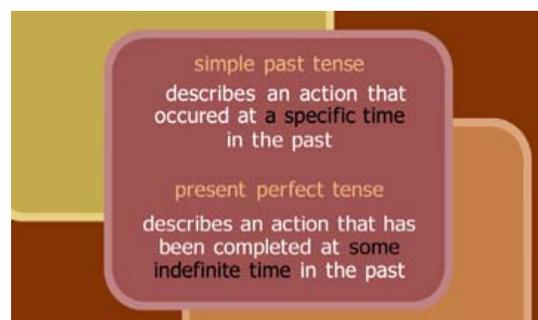
He says that: "There were much lower concentrations pre-industrially".

This refers to a particular time in the past - that is, 'pre-industrially' or 'before the industrial revolution' in Europe.

The atmosphere was cleaner then because there weren't industries producing greenhouse gases and other pollution.

So, the *simple past tense* describes an action that occurred at 'a specific time' in the past.

But the *present perfect tense* describes an action that has been completed at 'some indefinite time' in the past.



We've already seen how the reporter uses the *adverb* 'just'. 'Just' is an *adverb of time*.

There are several *adverbs of time*. They can be used with the *present perfect tense* to give a number of different meanings.

Listen again.

The air archived in ice helps prove how much the level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere has changed in just the last two hundred years.



The reporter uses the *adverb* 'just'.

When you are using the *present perfect* to talk about a recently completed action, you can use the *adverbs* 'just', 'already', 'yet' or 'still'.

For example:

"The level has changed in 'just' two hundred years."

"The Earth's atmosphere has 'already' been destroyed."

The *adverbs of time* 'yet' and 'still' are used in question forms and negative constructions.

For example:

"Have you finished your assignment yet?"

"No. I am still writing the introduction."

Or:

"Have you finished your assignment yet?"

"No I haven't written the introduction yet."

When we're using the *present perfect tense* to talk about an action that took place at some 'indefinite time' in the past, we can use the *adverbs of time* 'ever' and 'never'.

'Ever' is often used in questions. It means 'has the thing been done at any time in the past'.

Some examples are:

"Have you ever been to China?"

"No, I've never been there."

Finally, when we're talking about an action that took place at a point in the past, up to and including now, we can use the *adverbs of time* 'for' 'from' and 'since'.

For example:

"I have been at this school for three months, since March."

So you can see that there are different *adverbs of time* for different uses of the *present perfect*.

The *present perfect* is a difficult tense to learn.

It's used in statements about actions that began in the past and are still true now.

But it can take a lot of practice to get right.

Using *adverbs of time* can be useful because they help to clarify the precise use of the tense.

Practice using *adverbs of time*, and you'll find making the right choice becomes much easier.

And that's all for Study English today.

Let's review what we've done.

We've looked at the *simple past tense*, and the *present perfect tense*.

And then we talked about using *adverbs of time* in these present perfect constructions.



Don't forget that you'll find more on these topics on our website. It's at australianetwork.com/studyenglish. You'll find all the Study English stories, transcripts, study notes and much more.

And I'll see you next time. Bye bye.