Past Tense and Sequence Adverbs

Zuzana Tomaš and Kate Sadeghpour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Beginner to intermediate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>Focus on verb endings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sequence adverbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participate in an integrated skills activity that promotes noticing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Time</td>
<td>20–30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation Time</td>
<td>0–15 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Smartphone or camera</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Poster board (optional)</td>
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In the language experience approach, learners engage in a collective out-of-class or in-class experience followed by a collaborative write-up of the experience and repeated reading of the produced text. This activity explores the benefit of implementing the language experience approach not only to practice reading and writing, but also to help learners notice specific grammar, in this case the past tense and sequencing adverbs.

PROCEDURE

1. Have students do a collaborative activity requiring at least four steps. In-class activities may include such activities as preparing food (sandwiches, fruit salad); making holiday ornaments, collages, or artwork; or playing a board game.

2. With student permission, take photos of your students during the experience. (If students are uneasy about being photographed, just take notes.)

3. Ask students to remember what they did. Show photos as reminders as needed.

4. Write their recollections on the board or a piece of poster board. Help students by eliciting details and feedback.

5. Once the story is written down, work with learners to improve the grammatical forms, specifically the past-tense morpheme –ed in regular verbs and the correct verb forms of irregular verbs.

6. Introduce students to sequence adverbs (e.g., first, second, next, finally) as a way of clarifying sequencing.
7. After students reread the improved version of the story, ask them to describe something they did in the past. Remind students to pay attention to the target grammar forms as they tell their story or write up a recount of their past experience.

8. Ask students to share their stories.

CAVEATS AND OPTIONS

This activity can be scaled to higher level classes by choosing more complex class experiences and dividing the activity over two classes: the experience and photo-taking part in the first class and working through the past tense, possibly past perfect, and sequence adverbs part of the activity in the subsequent class.
PAST TENSE

From Beginning to End

Dino Mahoney

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Intermediate to advanced</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>Use the past tense and joining words in short narratives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop creative storytelling skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Time</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation Time</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Index cards (or slips of paper)</td>
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</table>

Students practice the past tense and work on temporal connectors and other transition words by developing stories to connect a first and last sentence.

PROCEDURE

1. Prepare two sets of index cards. Each set should contain enough cards for each group of three to four students:
   - **Set 1**: Each index card should contain one sentence that could serve as the beginning of a story; all the cards in this set can contain the same sentence. An example beginning might be, “It was a cold, wet Sunday in February, so Georgina thought it would be a good day to stay at home and read a book.”
   - **Set 2**: Each index card should contain one sentence that could serve as the end of a story. It’s a good idea to have several different possible endings, and the endings should be intriguing. For example, “After that, she decided it was time to move,” or “She never again opened her front door to a stranger.”

2. In class, divide the students into groups of three or four.
3. Give each group two of the prepared cards, one from Set 1 and one from Set 2.
4. Appoint one student in each group as the scribe.
5. Ask each group to create a story that fills in the missing information, making sure to set a time limit, for example, 15 minutes.
6. Circulate among the groups to give feedback as needed.
7. Stop the activity after the time is up and ask the scribes to tell their group’s story.
8. Have the class vote on the best story.
CAVEATS AND OPTIONS

1. Students can write out their stories during class or for homework.
2. Give a list of specific lexical or other items that students must use in their stories, for example:
   - attorney
   - helicopter
   - Inspector Stevenson
   - but before doing that . . .
   - when she realized that . . .
   - the next thing she remembered was . . .
In this activity, students learn the present perfect in three stages: 1) exploration, finding patterns in given examples; 2) explanation, connecting the examples to the use of present perfect; and 3) expression, practicing the present perfect in a communicative activity.

**PROCEDURE**

**Explore**

1. Project (or write on board) examples of sentences in present perfect tense, the verb forms underlined. Arrange students in groups and ask them to look at the sentences.

   **Examples**
   - I have been to Buckingham Palace.
   - He has studied French for years.

2. Play a song or music video from YouTube, for example “I Still Haven’t Found What I’m Looking For,” by U2 (www.youtube.com/watch?v=e3-5YC_oHjE).

3. Ask students to write down examples of lyrics that use the present perfect. If this is too challenging, distribute a handout with the lyrics or with a cloze of the lyrics. Play twice if necessary, then write or project example lyrics with verb forms underlined.
Examples
I have climbed the highest mountains
I have run through the fields
Only to be with you
But I still haven’t found
What I’m looking for.

4. Put students in pairs or groups and ask them to identify the verb and time expression patterns for 5–10 minutes.

5. Circulate to listen in on each group, then ask students to share their findings. Guide the discussion with questions: Based on the underlined verbs, when do you use present perfect tense? How do you form the present perfect?

Explain

6. Connect the examples to an explanation of how the present perfect tense is used. For example, using the sentences written on the board in Step 3, you could say:

“The first two actions have already happened but at an unspecified time, so the present perfect is used with indefinite time expressions. The third action has not happened yet but is expected to at some point. Using the present perfect suggests that the speaker is still waiting for this action to happen.”

7. Write the grammatical structure on board.

\[
\begin{align*}
I/We/You/They & + \text{ have } + \text{ past participle} \\
He/She/It & + \text{ has } + \text{ past participle}
\end{align*}
\]

Question formation using present perfect

\[
\begin{align*}
Have/Has & + \text{ subject } + \text{ past participle}
\end{align*}
\]

Examples
• Have you been to New York in the last year?
• Has she seen her new apartment?

Express

8. Have students practice using present perfect by interviewing their classmates about some of their experiences using the prepared worksheet with interview questions. Advise the students that “yes” answers require a follow-up question in the simple past.

Example

Student 1: Have you written a poem?
Student 2: Yes, I have.
Student 1: When did you write your poem?
Student 2: When I was in high school in Colombia for a school project.
9. To follow up on the paired interview, play the Hot Potato game as a whole class. Have a student pass a baton (or another object) to the next student while music is playing. Stop the music randomly. Whoever is holding the baton gets the chance to share one item from the interview.

   **Example**
   
   Maria has written a poem. She wrote it in Colombia for a school project.

**CAVEATS AND OPTIONS**

Depending on the class level, this activity may be more appropriate as a review of the present perfect tense.
Present Perfect Mingle

Erin Kuester

Levels | High beginner to intermediate

Aims | Practice asking and answering questions using the present perfect

Class Time | 15–20 minutes

Preparation Time | 5 minutes

Resources | Handout (Appendix)

Students mingle, asking and answering questions about their past experiences using present perfect tense. They then work with a partner to share their information.

**PROCEDURE**

1. Explain that the class is going to learn about their classmates by asking them about things they have or haven’t done in the past.

2. Distribute the worksheet, explaining that they will be walking around the room and talking to each student using the present perfect to ask classmates whether they have or have not done the activity on the handout until they have filled in every square on the worksheet with someone’s name who has answered “yes” to the question.

   **Example**

   **Instructor:** Li, have you ever broken a bone?
   
   **Li:** Yes, I have!
   
   **Instructor:** Wow! Can you write your name in this box? Abdullah, have you ever climbed a mountain?
   
   **Abdullah:** No, I’ve never climbed a mountain.
   
   **Instructor:** Oh okay, let me ask you a different question.

3. Review the sentences on the handout and entertain any vocabulary questions. Note that because the verbs are in their base form, students will need to supply the past participles.

4. Have students walk around the classroom asking their questions. Circulate to ensure students are using English and to offer feedback or answer questions.

5. Once students have completed their worksheet or sufficient practice time has passed, pair the students and give them a few minutes discuss some of the information they learned.
6. Debrief with the whole class, letting students talk about themselves or their classmates.

**Example**

_Instructor:_ Okay, who here has sung karaoke?

_Wang:_ I have sung karaoke before! I talked to Aya, and she has sung karaoke, too.

**CAVEATS AND OPTIONS**

1. For lower level classes, ask students to supply the past participles of verbs before beginning to ask questions.

2. As a follow-up, assign students to write a short paragraph reporting on the most surprising or interesting information they learned.

3. Leave space on the worksheet for students to fill in a question of their own creation.

**APPENDIX: Present Perfect Worksheet**

**Present Perfect Bingo**

**HAVE YOU EVER . . .**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Climb a mountain</th>
<th>Break a bone</th>
<th>Sing in the shower</th>
<th>Fall down the stairs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>____________</td>
<td>___________</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eat a whole pizza by yourself</th>
<th>Lock your keys inside your house/dorm/car</th>
<th>Get stuck in the rain with no umbrella</th>
<th>Go to dinner and forget your wallet</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change a car tire</th>
<th>See the same movie twice in theaters</th>
<th>Drop an ice cream cone after you bought it</th>
<th>Win a contest or competition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>____________</td>
<td>______________</td>
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<td>______________</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Go to Disney World</th>
<th>Go to a concert</th>
<th>Stay awake for 24 hours</th>
<th>Sing karaoke</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>____________</td>
<td>____________</td>
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