

Grammar point: 文法

A: When is it appropriate to use the present perfect tense?¹

B: We normally use the present perfect tense when we describe something without specifying a time.² For example, one can say “I have seen that film five times” without specifying a time.³ Also, we can use present perfect tense when we talk about a change that has happened over a period of time.⁴ For example, in this episode Cooper says, “We’ve given too much weight to the development of the city, and forgotten to preserve the history of the city.”⁵ Here, Cooper uses present perfect tense to describe the change that has happened in the city.⁶

A: What about the past perfect tense? When shall we use it?⁷

B: We normally use the past perfect tense when we go further back in time from the past event we are talking about.⁸ For example, we can say, “I *had already finished* the homework by the time the teacher entered the classroom.”⁹ This sentence suggests that the teacher entering the classroom took place in the past and the completion of the homework was done even further in the past, prior to the teacher entering the classroom.¹⁰

