

Common mistakes in the use of verbs

In this article we will take a closer look at some common mistakes in the use of verbs.

Incorrect: I **have visited** him yesterday.

Correct: I **visited** him yesterday.

Incorrect: They **have finished** the work a week ago.

Correct: They **finished** the work a week ago.

The **present perfect tense** cannot be used with adverbs that refer to a definite point of time in the past. If you want to say when something happened in the past, you have to use the **simple past tense**.

Incorrect: We had gone to the movies last night.

Correct: We **went** to the movies last night.

Incorrect: I **had seen** him yesterday.

Correct: I **saw** him yesterday.

The **past perfect tense** is not used to say that something happened some time ago. That idea is expressed using the simple past tense.

The past perfect tense is only used to suggest that an action had completed before another action commenced.

For example, you can say: We **had eaten** our dinner before we **went** to the movies last night.

Incorrect: I **had spoken** to the boys about my holiday.

Correct: I **have spoken** to the boys about my holiday.

We use the present perfect tense to talk about actions and situations that happened at an unspecified point of time in the past.

Note that we use the **past simple tense** if we mention a specific point of time in the past.

Incorrect: He **hanged** the pictures on the wall.

Correct: He **hung** the pictures on the wall.

Incorrect: The terrorist was hung.

Correct: The terrorist **was hanged**.

Use hanged to talk about execution by hanging.

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