

Games and activities to practice the Present Perfect tense

I've been unique

Students have to go around the class asking a “Have you ever...?” question to everyone else to find something they have done and no one else in the class has, e.g. “Have you ever eaten snake?” If anyone else says “Yes, I have”, they have to think of a new idea and start asking everyone all over again. If they think they have asked everyone and they have all said “No”, they can score a point and sit down. When the game has finished ask them what they have done that no one else has and check if it's true.

Where have I been? Where am I now?

Photocopy and hand out one map of the world, a country or an area per pair of students. Ask students to draw a circular route to see the whole of the place shown on the map, e.g. a round the world backpacker's tour. They should then mark one random place somewhere in the middle of the tour. This is where they are now.

Put the pairs together in groups of four. The aim of each team is find where the other team is now by asking “Have you already been to...?” questions, without looking at the other team's map. The other team must answer “Yes, we have”, “No, we haven't, but we are planning on going there” or “No, we haven't, and we aren't planning on going there”. They can also provide more information like “Yes, we have. We went there a long time ago.” or “No, we haven't been there yet but we are going there fairly soon” if they like. The first team to successfully guess the other team's position now is the winner.

You can then discuss which places students chose for their tour and why, if anyone has ever been to any of those places and agrees that they are worth visiting, or even anyone has any plans to really visit any.

I've never had a job interview

Give out roleplay cards with a different sentence saying why someone might be unemployable written in the Present Perfect on each one, e.g. “You have never used a computer” or “You are 23 years old and you have already had 15 jobs”. Students interview each other for jobs, trying to think of the right question to find out their partner's secret problem. Students cannot lie about the problem on their card, but they can try and avoid the question. For any other questions they can give real answers about themselves or use their imaginations as they wish.

After a set time limit, stop them and discuss as a class whether the students who were the interviewers would give the interviewees the job and why. Then have the

interviewees reveal their problems and ask the interviewers if they have changed their minds now they know the problem or not.

As an extension, you could do one more round with role cards made up by the students.

Three strikes and you're a liar

Students ask their partners a Yes/ No "Have you ever...?" question, e.g. "Have you ever been to Mongolia?" Their partner must answer "Yes, I have" even if it's not true. After 3 more questions about the details (which they can also lie when answering if they like), e.g. "When did you go to Mongolia?"/ "What kind of food did you eat?"/ "What was the weather like?" the questioner should guess whether the original answer was true or false.

Haven't I met you somewhere before?

This is a game from the photocopiable book "Intermediate Communication Games" that you can also make a homemade version of in class as described below.

Put students in pairs and ask them to imagine a point in their lives when they met before the time before their real first meeting and write the time and place of that meeting (but not the fact that they met anyone) down in the middle of their piece of paper, e.g. they both write "In 1997 I took a ferry to England". They should then find out six things about their partner's life story that (really) happened before and after that time, e.g. "I was born in 1970", "I moved to India in 1977" and "I went on holiday in the South of France in the summer of 1991" and write them all on the same piece of paper in the relevant places.

Take in all the pieces of paper, shuffle them up and distribute them around the class. Make sure no one has a piece of paper they have seen before. Students should imagine they are at a party and go round the class trying to find the one person whose paper matches, i.e. the one person they have met before. Every time they approach someone they should say "Haven't we met somewhere before?" and ask about places they have and haven't been and when to try and find a match. If there is a match they score a point and can sit down. If not, they have to politely finish the conversation and move on to start a conversation with someone else. Students who are sitting down waiting for others to finish can try and guess whose life story is written on each piece of paper together.