The English present perfect simple 1 – grammar activity 2.

Use present perfect where possible in the following sentences. If present perfect isn't possible, use past simple. Write your answers below each sentence.

1) I (go) to the cinema last week to see Titanic 3D. It was very good.

2) Mary and John (get married) again. They’re very happy at the moment.

3) Company sales (increase) this week by twenty percent. In a crisis, that's good news!

4) I (not study) the present perfect. I don't know how to use it.

5) The train (stop) at the station for three hours! We eventually arrived late last night.

6) You (have) a holiday last summer? Yes, in Greece. It was lovely.

7) If you (finish) your lemonade, you can have some more.

8) You (see) that strange light in the sky on Sunday evening? I think it was a UFO.

9) He (lose) all his money on the train. He's very upset. He doesn't know what to do.

10) You (buy) me a newspaper today or do I have to go and buy one myself?

11) John (forget) to bring his swimming trunks to the beach. Now he wants to borrow mine!

12) Mary, you (not shut) the door. Look, it's wide open!
Teacher’s notes.
Present Perfect Simple 1. Activity 2 - answers.

(Time for activity 2: 40 mins approx. Level: lower intermediate.)

1. went 7. have finished
2. have got married 8. Did you see
3. have increased 9. has lost
4. haven’t studied 10. Have you bought
5. Stopped 11. has forgotten
6. Did you have 12. haven’t shut

(Any contracted forms with the subject are also possible, eg. Mary and John’ve got married... .)

What students should look for here are any time adverbs which indicate past time. If there are any, then present perfect cannot be used in that sentence. You may (or may not, if you don’t want to confuse a happy class!) point out that the present perfect sentences here could be said in past simple. As mentioned in the guided discovery sheet on this (see link below), this is usually because the speaker is thinking about a past time – even though it is not mentioned. There are other reasons too, however. In US English, there is often a preference for past simple over present perfect in these situations. But in all cases, a past time adverb requires a past tense verb. (I know of only one exception with the adverb “just”: the British say “he’s just gone out” while in the US they often say “he just went out”.)

Oral activity: Give out two pieces of blank card to each student. Ask each student to write (copying from a list on the board) a time adverb on one card. A suggested list could be:

Past time adverbs: yesterday, 2 days ago, last week, last month, 10 years ago, when I was a baby, etc.

Present time adverbs: this morning (if it is morning), today, this week, this month, this year, recently, etc.

On the other card each student writes the name of an object or an event: a book, a film, a rock concert, the Olympic Games etc.

Put the adverbs in one pile on the table and the others in a separate pile beside the first. Divide the class into two teams. A member from a team takes a card from each pile. She/he must make a sentence in present perfect IF POSSIBLE – if not, in past simple. Eg. THIS MORNING, ROCK CONCERT: “I haven’t been to a rock concert this morning.” The turn passes to the next team. The teacher decides what points to award.

Enjoy the class!