Touchstone 3
Unit 2-B
Present Perfect vs. Simple Past
A class by Mr. Jean Paul Quiñonez
Do you remember the present perfect?

- We have tried to travel to Lima several times.
- My family has bought a new car this year.
- Have you ever visited Machu Picchu?

Events referring to the indefinite past or a period of time until now
Let’s focus on the previous example

- Have you ever visited Machu Picchu?
  No, I haven’t. I have never been there.

Since the time you were born, you haven’t visited Machu Picchu.

That means that the situation remains the same for a period of time, generally since a person was born, or in other cases since the situation started to be like that.
However

- Have you ever visited Machu Picchu?
  
  Yes, I have. I went with my family last year.

That means that the situation had a time reference and a specific moment in the past. So you have to refer to it using simple past.
Talking about the past

- My father worked for Interbank 20 years ago.
- You didn’t like fruit when you were a kid.
- Life was easier in the sixties.
- Why did José leave the company last year? Because he has other job opportunities.
Using the present perfect

- I have never danced Marinera.
- Has your mother ever cooked «Gaspacho» for you?
  No, she hasn’t. She hasn’t had the time.
- Peruvians have never surrendered on their purposes.
- Have you ever drunk «Tequila»?
  No, I haven’t drunk any liquor.

Present Perfect refers to an event from a point in the past up to now.
Have you ever...?

These question is used for getting information about something or someone you don’t know.

- Have you ever written a poem?
  
  No, I haven’t. I don’t know how to write poetry.
  
  Yes, I have. I wrote a poem for my wife when I met her in 2010.

If the answer is positive, we have to use simple past for default to specify when that event took place.
Have you ever traveled to Europe?

Yes, I went there for a business meeting in 2000.

Has Tom’s family ever come by for dinner?

No, they haven’t. We have never had them home.

Have your grandparents ever gone snorkeling?

Yes, they have. They went snorkeling when they visited the Mayan Riviera in 1998. They were young then.