



Ever and Never

Ever means 'at any time'. Never means 'at no time' or 'not at any time'. We often use 'ever' and 'never' with the present perfect, but they can also be used with other verb tenses.

- I've never been to Brazil.
- They had never seen such a beautiful sunset before.
- Does she ever visit her mother?

In US English, 'never' and 'ever' are common with the past simple. This is less common in UK English.

- I never saw such a big fish before.

We use 'ever' with questions.

- Have you ever studied German?
- Has Lucy ever been to the theatre?
- Do you ever come to London?

For negative questions, we can use 'not ever'.

- Doesn't he ever call his grandmother?

We use 'ever' in negative sentences if we have 'not'.

- I haven't ever been here before = I have never been here before.
- He doesn't ever take any exercise = he never takes any exercise.

We use 'ever' with negative adverbs like 'hardly' or 'barely' or 'scarcely' and in sentences with 'nothing' or 'nobody' or 'no one'.

- Nobody has ever bought my paintings before.
- Nothing ever turns out right!
- We hardly ever go to the cinema.
- She barely ever replies to my emails.

We can use 'ever' with superlatives and adjectives like 'only' and 'first'.

- It was the first time that she'd ever been abroad.
- That is the best meal that we've ever had.
- It's the only thing that I've ever wanted.

With comparatives, we can use 'than ever'.

- She was working harder than ever.
- My life is better than ever!

We can use 'ever' after 'if'.

- If you ever want a job, let me know.
- If she ever comes to London, she can stay with me.

We can use 'never ever' to make the meaning of 'never' stronger. This is informal and often used by children.

- I'll never ever come here again!

Sometimes 'ever' can mean 'always'.



We use 'as ... as ever' to say that something is the same as always.

- He's as kind as ever (= he's still very kind / he's as kind as always).
- The city is as exciting as ever (= the city is still very exciting / the city is as exciting as always).

We use 'ever since' to mean all the time since a certain point. (We can also use 'since' without 'ever' in these examples, but 'ever' makes it stronger.)

- I've loved London ever since I was a child.
- She's wanted to have children ever since she met her husband.

We use 'ever' to mean 'always' when we say 'for ever' or 'forever'.

- I will love you for ever and ever.

We use 'ever' to mean 'always' in some compounds and in some set expressions like 'happily ever after'.

- The trees are evergreen.
- The prince and princess lived happily ever after.

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