

## Present perfect 1 (I have done)

A Study this example situation:



Tom can't find his key.  
He's **lost** his key. (= He **has lost** ...)

he **has lost** his key =  
he lost it and he doesn't have it now

**have lost** / **has lost** is the *present perfect simple*:

I/we/they/you	<b>have</b> (= I've etc.)	<b>finished lost done been</b> etc.
he/she/it	<b>has</b> (= he's etc.)	

The present perfect simple is **have/has** + *past participle*. The past participle often ends in **-ed** (finished**ed**/decided**ed** etc.), but many verbs are *irregular* (**lost**/**done**/**written** etc.).

For a list of irregular verbs, see Appendix 1.

B When we say 'something **has happened**', this is usually new information:

- ☐ Ow! I've **cut** my finger.
- ☐ The road is closed. There's **been** an accident. (= There **has been** ...)
- ☐ Police **have arrested** two men in connection with the robbery.

When we use the present perfect, there is a connection with *now*. The action in the past has a result *now*:

- ☐ Tom **has lost** his key. (= he doesn't have it *now*)
- ☐ He told me his name, but I've **forgotten** it. (= I can't remember it *now*)
- ☐ Sally is still here. She **hasn't gone** out. (= she is here *now*)
- ☐ I can't find my bag. **Have** you **seen** it? (= do you know where it is *now*?)

Compare **gone (to)** and **been (to)**:

- ☐ James is on holiday. He **has gone to** Italy. (= he is there now or on his way there)
- ☐ Amy is back home now. She **has been to** Italy. (= she has now come back)

C You can use the present perfect with **just**, **already** and **yet**.

**Just** = a short time ago:

- ☐ 'Are you hungry?' 'No, I've **just had** lunch.'
- ☐ Hello. **Have** you **just arrived**?

**Already** = sooner than expected:

- ☐ 'Don't forget to pay the bill.' 'I've **already paid** it.'
- ☐ 'What time is Mark leaving?' 'He's **already left**.'

**Yet** = until now. We use **yet** to show that we are expecting something to happen.

We use **yet** in questions and negative sentences:

- ☐ **Has** it **stopped** raining **yet**?
- ☐ I've written the email, but I **haven't sent** it **yet**.

D You can also use the past simple (**did**, **went**, **had** etc.) in the examples on this page. So you can say:

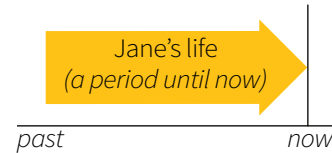
- ☐ Ben isn't here. He's **gone** out. or He **went** out.
- ☐ 'Are you hungry?' 'No, I've **just had** lunch.' or 'No, I **just had** lunch.'

## Present perfect 2 (I have done)

## A

Study this example conversation:

- DAVE: **Have** you **travelled** a lot, Jane?  
 JANE: Yes, I've **been** to lots of places.  
 DAVE: Really? **Have** you ever **been** to China?  
 JANE: Yes, I've **been** to China twice.  
 DAVE: What about India?  
 JANE: No, I **haven't been** to India.



When we talk about a period of time that continues from the past until now, we use the *present perfect* (**have been** / **have travelled** etc.). Here, Dave and Jane are talking about the places Jane **has visited** in her life, which is a period that continues until now.

In the same way we say:

- ☐ **Have** you **ever eaten** caviar?
- ☐ We've never **had** a car.
- ☐ I don't know what the film is about. I **haven't seen** it.
- ☐ Susan really loves that book. She's **read** it three times. (She's = She **has**)
- ☐ It's a really boring movie. It's the most boring movie I've **ever seen**.

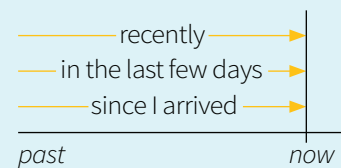
**been (to)** = visited:

- ☐ I've never **been to** Canada. Have you **been** there?

## B

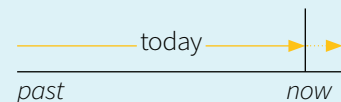
In the following examples too, the speakers are talking about a period that continues until now (**recently**, **in the last few days**, **so far**, **since I arrived** etc.):

- ☐ **Have** you **heard** anything from Ben **recently**?
- ☐ I've **met** a lot of people **in the last few days**.
- ☐ Everything is going well. There **haven't been** any problems **so far**.
- ☐ The weather is bad here. It's (= It **has**) **rained** every day **since I arrived**. (= from when I arrived until now)
- ☐ It's good to see you again. We **haven't seen** each other **for a long time**.



In the same way we use the present perfect with **today**, **this evening**, **this year** etc. when these periods are not finished at the time of speaking:

- ☐ I've **drunk** four cups of coffee **today**.
- ☐ **Have** you **had** a holiday **this year**?
- ☐ I **haven't seen** Tom **this morning**. Have you?



## C

We say 'It's the (first) time something **has happened**'. For example:

Don is having a driving lesson. It's his first lesson.  
 We can say:

- ☐ It's the first time he **has driven** a car. (*not drives*)
- or He **hasn't driven** a car **before**.
- or He **has never driven** a car **before**.

In the same way we say:

- ☐ Sarah has lost her passport again. This is the second time this **has happened**. (*not happens*)
- ☐ Andy is phoning his girlfriend again. It's the third time he's **phoned** her **this evening**.



## Present perfect continuous (I have been doing)

## A It's been raining.

Study this example situation:



Is it raining?

No, but the ground is wet.

**It's been raining.** (= It **has** been ...)**have/has been + -ing** is the *present perfect continuous*:I/we/they/you  
he/she/it**have  
has**(= I've etc.)  
(= he's etc.)**been****doing  
working  
learning** etc.

We use the present perfect continuous for an activity that has recently stopped or just stopped:

- ☐ Why are you out of breath? **Have you been running?**
- ☐ Paul is very tired. **He's been working** hard.
- ☐ Why are you so tired? What **have you been doing?**
- ☐ I've **been talking** to Amanda and she agrees with me.
- ☐ Where have you been? I've **been looking** for you.

**have/has been + -ing**  
*present perfect continuous*

now

## B It's been raining for two hours.

Study this example situation:



It began raining two hours ago and it is still raining.

How long **has it been raining?****It's been raining** for two hours. (= It **has** been ...)We use the present perfect continuous in this way, especially with **how long**, **for ...** and **since ...**. The activity is still happening (as in this example) or has just stopped.

- ☐ **How long have you been learning** English? (= you're still learning English)
- ☐ Ben is watching TV. **He's been watching** TV all day.
- ☐ Where have you been? I've **been looking** for you **for the last half hour**.
- ☐ Chris **hasn't been feeling** well **recently**.

You can use the present perfect continuous for repeated actions:

- ☐ Silvia is a very good tennis player. She's **been playing** **since she was eight**.
- ☐ Every morning they meet in the same cafe. They've **been going** there **for years**.

## C Compare I am doing and I have been doing:

**I am doing***present continuous*

now

- ☐ Don't disturb me now. I'm **working**.
- ☐ We need an umbrella. **It's raining**.
- ☐ Hurry up! We're **waiting**.

**I have been doing***present perfect continuous*

now

- ☐ I've **been working** hard. Now I'm going to have a break.
- ☐ The ground is wet. **It's been raining**.
- ☐ We've **been waiting** for an hour.

# Present perfect continuous and simple (I have been doing and I have done)

## A

Compare these two situations:



There is paint on Kate's clothes. She **has been painting** her bedroom.

**has been painting** is the *present perfect continuous*.

We are thinking of the activity. It does not matter whether it has been finished or not. In this example, the activity (painting the bedroom) has not been finished.



The bedroom was green. Now it is yellow. She **has painted** her bedroom.

**has painted** is the *present perfect simple*.

Here, the important thing is that something has been finished. 'She **has painted**' is a completed action. We are thinking about the *result* of the activity (the painted bedroom), not the activity itself.

## B

Compare these examples:

- ☐ My hands are very dirty. **I've been repairing** my bike.
- ☐ Joe **has been eating** too much recently. He should eat less.
- ☐ It's nice to see you again. What **have** you **been doing** since we last met?
- ☐ Where have you been? **Have** you **been playing** tennis?

- ☐ My bike is OK again now. **I've repaired it.** (= I've finished repairing it)
- ☐ Somebody **has eaten** all the chocolates. The box is empty.
- ☐ Where's the book I gave you? What **have** you **done** with it?
- ☐ **Have** you ever **played** tennis?

## C

We use the continuous to say *how long* (for something that is still happening):

- ☐ How long **have** you **been reading** that book?
- ☐ Amy is writing emails. She's **been writing** emails all morning.
- ☐ They've **been playing** tennis since 2 o'clock.
- ☐ I'm learning Arabic, but I **haven't been learning** it very long.

We use the simple to say *how much*, *how many* or *how many times* (for completed actions):

- ☐ How many pages of that book **have** you **read**?
- ☐ Amy **has sent** lots of emails this morning.
- ☐ They've **played** tennis three times this week.
- ☐ I'm learning Arabic, but I **haven't learnt** very much yet.

## D

Some verbs (for example, **know**) are not normally used in continuous forms (**be + -ing**):

- ☐ I've **known** about the problem for a long time. (*not* I've been knowing)
- ☐ How long **have** you **had** that camera? (*not* have you been having)

For a list of these verbs, see Unit 4A. For **have**, see Unit 17.

But note that you *can* use **want** and **mean** in the present perfect continuous (**have/has been + -ing**):

- ☐ I've **been meaning** to phone Anna, but I keep forgetting.

## how long have you (been) ... ?

A Study this example situation:



Dan and Kate are married. They got married exactly 20 years ago, so today is their 20th wedding anniversary.

They **have been** married **for 20 years**.

We say: They **are** married. (*present*)

but How long have they **been** married?  
(*not* How long are they married?)  
They **have been** married **for 20 years**. (*present perfect*)  
(*not* They are married for 20 years)

We use the *present perfect* to talk about something that began in the past and still continues now.

Compare the *present* and *present perfect*:

- ☐ Paul is in hospital.
- but He's **been** in hospital **since Monday**. (= He **has** been ...)  
(*not* Paul is in hospital since Monday)
- ☐ We **know** each other very well.
- but We've **known** each other **for a long time**.  
(*not* We know)
- ☐ Do they **have** a car?
- but How long **have** they **had** their car?
- ☐ She's **waiting** for somebody.
- but She **hasn't been** waiting very long.

*present*  
he is  
we know  
do they have  
she is waiting

*present perfect*  
he has been  
we have known  
have they had  
she has been waiting

past

now

B I've known / I've had / I've lived etc. is the *present perfect simple*.  
I've been learning / I've been waiting etc. is the *present perfect continuous*.

When we ask or say 'how long', the continuous is more usual (see Unit 10):

- ☐ I've **been learning** English **since January**.
- ☐ It's **been raining** all morning.
- ☐ Richard **has been doing** the same job **for 20 years**.
- ☐ 'How long **have** you **been driving**?' 'Since I was 17.'

Some verbs (for example, **know** and **like**) are not normally used in the continuous:

- ☐ How long **have** you **known** Jane? (*not* have you been knowing)
- ☐ I've **had** these shoes for ages. (*not* I've been having)

See also Units 4A and 10C. For **have**, see Unit 17.

C You can use either the continuous or simple with **live** and **work**:

- ☐ Julia **has been living** in this house for a long time. *or* Julia **has lived** ...
- ☐ How long **have** you **been working** here? *or* How long **have** you **worked** here?

But we use the simple (**have lived** etc.) with **always**:

- ☐ I've **always lived** in the country. (*not* always been living)

D We say 'I haven't (done something) **since/for** ...' (*present perfect simple*):

- ☐ I **haven't seen** Tom since Monday. (= Monday was the last time I saw him)
- ☐ Sarah **hasn't phoned** for ages. (= the last time she phoned was ages ago)