

Grammar Practice Exercises

FOR and SINCE WHEN...? and HOW LONG...?

English Grammar in Use — Units 8-12
12 Exercises • 100+ Questions • With Exam Practice
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[NOTE] Document Navigation

*Quick Reference Pages are located at the **end of this document** (tearable).
Includes grammar summary card and ruled pages for personal notes.*

Grammar Summary: FOR and SINCE

FOR = a **period of time** (duration)

for two hours, three days, six months, a long time, ages

SINCE = a **point in time** (when something started)

since Monday, 2015, last summer, I was a child, breakfast

Main Uses:

1. With **Present Perfect** to talk about actions from past to present:
"I have lived here for five years." / "I have lived here since 2019."
2. With **Present Perfect Continuous** for ongoing activities:
"She has been waiting for an hour." / "She has been waiting since 3 o'clock."

Tip: WHEN vs. HOW LONG

- **WHEN...?** asks about a **specific point in time** → use **Past Simple**
"When did you arrive?" — "I arrived yesterday."
- **HOW LONG...?** asks about **duration** → use **Present Perfect**
"How long have you been here?" — "I've been here for two hours."

Difficulty Progression Guide

EASY (Exercises 1-4): Recognition, basic formation, simple completion

MEDIUM (Exercises 5-7): Context application, choosing between options

HARD (Exercises 8-9): Production, error correction, translation

EXAM PRACTICE (Exercises 10-12): IELTS, Cambridge, TOEFL

— EASY EXERCISES —

Recognition & Basic Formation

Exercises 1-4 focus on recognizing when to use FOR, SINCE, WHEN, and HOW LONG.

Complete these with 90%+ accuracy before moving to Medium exercises.

1 Exercise 1: Choose FOR or SINCE

Complete the sentences with *for* or *since*.

1. I've been waiting _____ over an hour.
2. She has lived in London _____ 2015.
3. They haven't seen each other _____ last Christmas.
4. We've known each other _____ a very long time.
5. He has been working here _____ he graduated from university.
6. I haven't eaten anything _____ breakfast this morning.
7. She's been studying English _____ three years.
8. They have been married _____ 1998.
9. I haven't spoken to him _____ last Monday.
10. We've had this car _____ six months.
11. He hasn't visited his parents _____ Easter.
12. I've been interested in photography _____ I was a child.
13. They've been playing tennis _____ two hours.
14. She hasn't called me _____ her birthday.
15. We've lived in this house _____ ages.

[TIP] IELTS Tip — Common Time Expressions

Learn these common expressions for IELTS Writing Task 2:

- **FOR:** *for decades, for many years, for a considerable period*
- **SINCE:** *since the beginning of the century, since the advent of technology*

2 Exercise 2: Complete the Sentences

Complete the sentences using the present perfect with **for**, **since**, or **how long** and the information in parentheses.

1. (I / not see / Sarah / two weeks)

2. (They / live / in this apartment / 2020)

3. (How long / you / know / each other?)

4. (She / be / a teacher / ten years)

5. (I / not eat / meat / I was 18)

6. (We / wait / the bus / 30 minutes)

7. (He / not play / football / his accident)

8. (How long / she / work / in that company?)

9. (They / be / friends / they were children)

10. (I / have / this laptop / last year)

3 Exercise 3: WHEN...? or HOW LONG...?

Choose the correct question word: **When** or **How long**.

1. _____ did you start learning English?
2. _____ have you been learning English?
3. _____ did they get married?
4. _____ have they been married?
5. _____ did she arrive in Brazil?

6. _____ has she been in Brazil?
7. _____ did you last see Tom?
8. _____ is it since you last saw Tom?
9. _____ did the meeting begin?
10. _____ has the meeting been going on?
11. _____ did he move to this city?
12. _____ has he lived in this city?

4 Exercise 4: Write Questions

Write questions using **When...?** or **How long...?** for these answers.

1. _____?
I started my job three years ago.
2. _____?
I've been working here for three years.
3. _____?
She moved to Paris in 2019.
4. _____?
She has been living in Paris since 2019.
5. _____?
They bought their house last summer.
6. _____?
They have had their house for about six months.
7. _____?
I last saw him two weeks ago.
8. _____?
I haven't seen him for two weeks.
9. _____?
The concert started at 8 PM.
10. _____?
The concert has been going on for two hours.

[TIP] Cambridge Tip — Question Formation

In Cambridge exams (FCE/CAE), question formation is tested in the **Use of English** section.

- **When** questions → usually expect **Past Simple** answers
- **How long** questions → usually expect **Present Perfect** answers

— MEDIUM EXERCISES —

Application & Context

Exercises 5-7 require applying the grammar rules in conversations and mixed contexts.

Complete with 85%+ accuracy before moving to Hard exercises.

5 Exercise 5: Mixed Practice — Conversations

*Complete the conversations with the correct form of the verb and **for**, **since**, **when**, or **how long**.*

Conversation 1

A: How long _____ (you / live) in this neighborhood?

B: I _____ (live) here _____ about five years.

A: Do you like it here?

B: Yes, I do. I _____ (be) very happy here _____ I moved in.

Conversation 2

A: _____ (you / know) Sarah long?

B: Yes, we _____ (be) friends _____ we were children.

A: That's nice. When _____ (you / meet) her?

B: We _____ (meet) in elementary school in 2005.

Conversation 3

A: How long _____ (John / work) at the hospital?

B: He _____ (work) there _____ about ten years.

A: When _____ (he / start)?

B: I think he _____ (start) in 2015.

Conversation 4

A: I _____ (not / see) Mark _____ ages. When _____ (you / last / see) him?

B: I _____ (see) him last week at the gym.

A: How is he?

B: He's great! He _____ (have) a new job _____ last month.

6 Exercise 6: Multiple Choice

Choose the correct option to complete each sentence.

1. I've known Maria ----- we were at university together.
A) for
B) since
C) during
D) while
2. She has been working at this company ----- more than ten years.
A) since
B) for
C) from
D) during
3. ----- did you last go on vacation?
A) How long
B) How much time
C) When
D) For how long
4. We haven't had any rain ----- three weeks.
A) since
B) during
C) for
D) from
5. ----- have you been waiting for the bus?
A) Since when
B) How long
C) When
D) How much
6. They've lived in this apartment ----- 2018.
A) for
B) during
C) from
D) since

7. I haven't eaten anything _____ breakfast.

- A) for
- B) from
- C) since
- D) during

8. _____ did you start playing the guitar?

- A) How long
- B) For how long
- C) When
- D) Since when

7 Exercise 7: Present Perfect Simple or Continuous?

Complete the sentences with the Present Perfect Simple or Present Perfect Continuous form of the verbs in parentheses. Use **for**, **since**, or **how long** where indicated.

1. She _____ (read) that book for three hours. She's still on chapter 5.
2. He _____ (read) three books this month.
3. We _____ (wait) for the bus since 8 o'clock.
4. I _____ (wait) for this package for two weeks. It finally arrived today!
5. They _____ (live) in this house for twenty years. They love it here.
6. How many countries _____ you _____ (visit) in your life?
7. How long _____ she _____ (learn) to drive?
8. I _____ (try) to call you since this morning. Where have you been?
9. She _____ (try) three different restaurants this week.
10. It _____ (rain) since yesterday. I hope it stops soon.

Tip: Simple vs. Continuous with FOR/SINCE

- **Present Perfect Continuous** = emphasizes the **duration/ongoing process**
"I've been reading for 3 hours." (still reading, focus on duration)
- **Present Perfect Simple** = emphasizes the **result/completion**
"I've read 3 books." (focus on quantity completed)

— HARD EXERCISES —*Production & Analysis*

Exercises 8-9 require correcting errors and translating from Portuguese to English.

These test your deeper understanding of the grammar rules.

8 Exercise 8: Correct the Mistakes

Each sentence has one mistake. Find and correct it.

1. I've been living here since three years.
Correction: _____
2. She has worked in that office for 2018.
Correction: _____
3. How long did you live in Japan? (He still lives there)
Correction: _____
4. When have you been studying English?
Correction: _____
5. I haven't seen her since two weeks.
Correction: _____
6. They are married since 2010.
Correction: _____
7. How long did she start working here?
Correction: _____
8. I know him since we were at school together.
Correction: _____
9. When did you have that car? (You still have it)
Correction: _____
10. He lives in London for five years.
Correction: _____

[!] Common Pitfalls

Watch out for these frequent errors:

- [X] *since three years* → [OK] ***for*** *three years*
- [X] *for 2018* → [OK] ***since*** *2018*
- [X] *I know him since...* → [OK] *I **have known** him since...*
- [X] *They are married since...* → [OK] *They **have been** married since...*

9 Exercise 9: Translation Practice

Translate these sentences into English using **for**, **since**, and the present perfect.

1. Eu moro aqui há três anos.

2. Ela não me liga desde o mês passado.

3. Há quanto tempo você estuda inglês?

4. Eles estão casados desde 2018.

5. Quando você começou a trabalhar aqui?

6. Eu não como carne há anos.

7. Ele está esperando há mais de uma hora.

8. Há quanto tempo você a conhece?

[TIP] Translation Strategy

In Portuguese, “há” can mean both “for” (duration) and “ago”:

- “*Eu moro aqui há 3 anos*” = I have lived here **for** 3 years (present perfect)
- “*Cheguei há 3 anos*” = I arrived 3 years **ago** (past simple)

— EXAM PRACTICE —*IELTS • Cambridge • TOEFL*

Exercises 10-12 simulate questions from international English exams.
Practice these to prepare for standardized tests.

10 Exercise 10: IELTS Writing Task 2 Practice**IELTS Writing Task 2 — Essay Excerpts**

Complete the essay excerpts using FOR, SINCE, or appropriate time expressions with the present perfect.

Topic: Technology and Education

1. Technology _____ (transform) the way students learn _____ the advent of personal computers in the 1980s.
2. Online education _____ (grow) significantly _____ the past decade.
3. Schools _____ (use) digital textbooks _____ several years now.
4. _____ when _____ universities _____ (offer) fully online degree programs?
5. The digital divide _____ (be) a concern _____ a considerable period of time.

IELTS Band 7+ Vocabulary

Use these sophisticated expressions in your essays:

- “*for a considerable period of time*” (formal: for a long time)
- “*since the turn of the century*” (since 2000)
- “*for the past few decades*” (for the last 20-30 years)
- “*since time immemorial*” (for a very long time — formal/literary)

11 Exercise 11: Cambridge Use of English

Cambridge FCE/CAE — Key Word Transformation

Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. You must use between two and five words, including the word given.

1. I started working here in 2019.
SINCE
I 2019.
2. The last time I saw her was in March.
SINCE
I March.
3. We moved to this city five years ago.
FOR
We five years.
4. She began studying French when she was 12.
SINCE
She she was 12.
5. They got married twenty years ago.
BEEN
They twenty years.
6. I last ate meat two years ago.
FOR
I two years.
7. When did you first meet John?
LONG
..... John?
8. It's three years since we went on holiday.
HAVEN'T
We three years.

[TIP] Key Word Transformation Strategy

Look for these common transformations:

- “I started... in 2019” → “I have... since 2019”
- “The last time I... was...” → “I haven’t... since...”
- “...ago” → “...for + period”

12 Exercise 12: TOEFL Integrated Skills

TOEFL iBT — Listening & Speaking Integration

Read the passage and answer the questions using FOR, SINCE, WHEN, or HOW LONG appropriately.

Passage:

Dr. Sarah Chen has been researching climate change at Stanford University since 2010. Before that, she worked at MIT for eight years. She started her career as a climate scientist in 1998, right after completing her PhD. Dr. Chen has published over 100 papers on the topic and has been warning about rising sea levels for the past fifteen years.

Questions:

1. _____ has Dr. Chen been at Stanford University?

2. _____ did she work at MIT?

3. _____ did she start her career as a climate scientist?

4. _____ has she been a climate scientist? (calculate from 1998)

5. _____ has she been warning about rising sea levels?

TOEFL Speaking Practice

Prepare a 45-second response answering: "How long have you been studying English, and when did you start?"

Use both **WHEN** (for the starting point) and **FOR/SINCE** (for the duration) in your response.

Your notes:

Quick Reference Card

FOR / SINCE / WHEN / HOW LONG

[GRAD] FOR vs. SINCE

FOR + period of time	SINCE + point in time
for two hours	since 9 o'clock
for three days	since Monday
for six months	since January
for a long time	since 2015
for ages	since last summer
for years	since I was a child

[GRAD] WHEN vs. HOW LONG

WHEN...? = specific time	HOW LONG...? = duration
When did you arrive? → <i>Past Simple</i>	How long have you been here? → <i>Present Perfect</i>
When did you start? → <i>I started in 2019.</i>	How long have you been working? → <i>I've been working for 5 years.</i>

[!] COMMON MISTAKES

[X] <i>since three years</i>	[OK] for three years
[X] <i>for 2018</i>	[OK] since 2018
[X] <i>I know him since...</i>	[OK] I have known him since...
[X] <i>They are married since...</i>	[OK] They have been married since...
[X] <i>How long did you start?</i>	[OK] When did you start?

Key Sentence Patterns

- I have lived here **for** 5 years / **since** 2019.
- She has been working **for** 3 hours / **since** 9 AM.
- **When** did you start? → I started in 2019.
- **How long** have you been here? → For 2 hours / Since 3 o'clock.

[illegible]





