

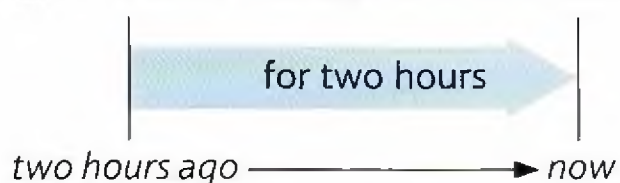
For and since When ... ? and How long ... ?

A

We use **for** and **since** to say how long something has been happening.

We use **for** + a period of time (**two hours, six weeks** etc.):

- ☐ I've been waiting **for two hours**.

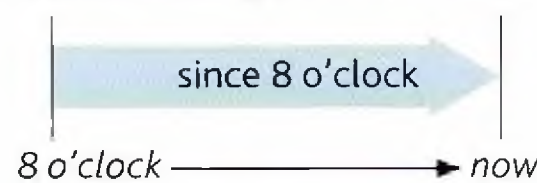


for		
two hours	20 minutes	five days
a long time	six months	50 years
a week	ages	years

- ☐ Sally has been working here **for six months**. (*not* since six months)
- ☐ I haven't seen Tom **for three days**.

We use **since** + the start of a period (**8 o'clock, Monday, 1999** etc.):

- ☐ I've been waiting **since 8 o'clock**.



since		
8 o'clock	Monday	12 May
April	2001	Christmas
lunchtime	we arrived	I got up

- ☐ Sally has been working here **since April**. (= from April until now)
- ☐ I haven't seen Tom **since Monday**.

It is possible to leave out **for** (but not usually in negative sentences):

- ☐ They've been married (for) **ten years**. (with or without **for**)
- ☐ They **haven't had** a holiday **for** ten years. (you must use **for**)

We do *not* use **for** + **all** ... (**all day / all my life** etc.):

- ☐ I've lived here **all my life**. (*not* for all my life)

You can use **in** instead of **for** in negative sentences (**I haven't** ... etc.):

- ☐ They **haven't had** a holiday **in ten years**. (= for ten years)

B

Compare **when** ... ? (+ *past simple*) and **how long** ... ? (+ *present perfect*):



A: **When** did it start raining?

B: It started raining **an hour ago / at 1 o'clock**.

A: **How long** has it been raining?

B: It's been raining **for an hour / since 1 o'clock**.



A: **When** did Joe and Carol first meet?

B: They first met { **a long time ago.**
when they were at school.

A: **How long** have they known each other?

B: They've known each other { **for a long time.**
since they were at school.

C

We say:

It's (= It is)
or **It's been** (= It has been)

a long time
six months (etc.)

since something happened

- ☐ **It's two years since** I last saw Joe. or **It's been two years since** ... (= I haven't seen Joe for two years)
- ☐ **It's ages since** we went to the cinema. or **It's been ages since** ... (= We haven't been to the cinema for ages)
- ☐ **How long is it since** Mrs Hill died? or **How long has it been since** ... ? (= When did Mrs Hill die?)