

Session 2

In this unit we've already heard from people talking about our emotional move to the BBC World Service's new home. In this session we'll be looking at the grammar you can use to talk about this kind of experience: the **present perfect** with the words **for** and **since**. We'll also hear from someone who has worked at the BBC since 1991!

Activity 1

"For 72 years, the BBC World Service has broadcast from Bush House..."

How long...?

In Session 1 we heard all about the experience of the BBC World Service moving from Broadcasting House. We heard different people talking about their memories of working there.

In the opening of the Leaving Bush House, we saw the following phrase with the present perfect:

From 1940 to 2012, the BBC World Service broadcast from Bush House.

So, since 2012 we **have broadcast** from our new home.

This verb form is called the present perfect. It has appeared before in our course in Unit 11 and is often used to talk about experiences. Here is a quick reminder of how to form the present perfect:

Positive

SUBJECT + HAVE/HAS + PAST PARTICIPLE

I have worked at the BBC since May.

We have broadcast from our new home for over two years.

Negative

SUBJECT + HAVEN'T/HASN'T + PAST PARTICIPLE

I haven't seen my boss for a few days.

He hasn't been in the office since last Monday.

Did you notice anything interesting about the ends of those sentences? They all ended with time references with either the word **for** or the word **since**. We use these two words with the present perfect to talk about how long something has happened or the point when it started up to now.

We have broadcast from our new home for over two years means that for two years we have worked here, broadcasting programmes. *I haven't seen my boss for a few days* means the period I haven't seen him is a few days.

We can use other time references that describe a period of time after **for**:

for a year, for two days, for 50 minutes, for a long time

I have worked at the BBC since May means I started working here in May. *He hasn't been in the office since last Monday* means he was in the office last Monday, but after that he hasn't been in.

We can use time references for points in time after **since**:

since 10 o'clock, since this morning, since January, since 1999

When we use the present perfect in this way, it usually means that the situation is still true now. Let's compare this with the past simple:

Catherine has worked at the BBC for eight years.

Catherine worked at the BBC for eight years.

In the first sentence, the meaning is that she started eight years ago, and she's still working at the BBC now. In the second sentence, she worked there for eight years, but she doesn't work there now.

Questions

To find out information about the period of time something has happened or when it started, we usually ask a question with *How long*. This is how we make questions with the present perfect:

HOW LONG + HAVE/HAS + SUBJECT + PAST PARTICIPLE

How long have you worked here?

How long have you lived in London

Sometimes, especially if we're talking about temporary or unfinished actions and events, we will ask a question with the present perfect continuous like this:

How long have you been working on your project?

To do

Now, let's test what you know. Look at these time references and decide if they come after **for** or **since** in present perfect sentences. Remember, we use **for** with periods of time and **since** goes with points in time.

Next

Now you've worked on the present perfect for a good amount of time!

In the next activity we continue looking at the present perfect. We're going to focus on how the word **since** can be used with this verb form. And we'll hear from someone who has worked for the BBC for over 20 years!

