



UNIT 1

AS PALE AS A GHOST

1. Do you remember these words?

So, let's read something you will probably understand easily:

*My best friend is so lucky. He has travelled a lot since he was a young man. He has visited so many places that I **have lost count** of the countries he has been to. **If my memory serves me right**, he has been to Mexico, Argentina and other Latin American countries, not only once but three times so far! He even got married there. He met a woman in Peru ten years ago and they have been together since then. How lucky he is! It's been months since I don't see him but we have known each other for twenty years now. I know him pretty well, so I'm pretty sure I can count on him every time I need to. I have been thinking of travelling somewhere and I have never been to America. It's time to ask him a favour. Will he **put me up** for a week?*

GLOSSARY

Lose count: to not be able to remember something.

If my memory serves me right: to remember something correctly.

Put sb up: to give someone a place to stay for a period of time.

Now let's see if you remember some vocabulary you should know. You are going to do three brief exercises to test yourself.

2. Reading

Now, we will read a text which is a little more complex.

Edward Jenner and the smallpox

Have you ever heard of chickenpox, smallpox, measles or flu? These are some examples of well-known diseases which ring a bell to all of us nowadays. But, were people so familiar with them some centuries ago?

The smallpox was an infectious illness which was especially spread across Europe and America. There was not medical treatment either a vaccine to protect those people from it. Many people died due to smallpox and permanent and severe effects were left to the "lucky" ones who survived [...].

[...] It was the English doctor and zoologist Edward Jenner who discovered the smallpox vaccination. He observed that cows caught an infectious disease, similar to smallpox, called cowpox. They passed on their illness to milkmaids, but after some days the infection disappeared. He realised that those humans who were infected by cowpox were immune to smallpox. From that point, in 1796 he came up with the idea of inoculating a young boy, James Phipps, with cowpox. He removed some pus from Sarah Nelmes, a milkmaid who caught the cowpox from cows, then, he introduced the pus in the child's arms. The 8-year-old boy suffered from a slight fever and other mild injuries. A couple of months later the child was again inoculated with smallpox that time, but he didn't catch the disease.

Today smallpox is not a threat to humankind there just exist some samples for research. Nowadays, Edward Jenner's action is thought to be immoral, nevertheless, thanks to his discovery, many people could overcome the disease. No wonder he is considered the pioneer of the vaccine against smallpox.

3. Vocabulary: illness

As you have seen in the reading, this topic is incredibly interesting. Let's see some vocabulary you should know. We are going to divide the glossary into some sections: types of illnesses, nouns, adjectives, idioms and phrasal verbs related to illnesses.

Smallpox	Chickenpox	Flu
Measles	Mumps	Sore throat
Headache	Fever	Rash
Disease	Syndrome	Disorder
Vaccine	Pill	Injury
Injection	Prescription	Catching
Contagious	Infectious	Mild
Painful	Painless	Sick as a dog
To feel under the weather	As pale as a ghost	At death's door
On one's last legs	Alive and kicking	Blue around the gills
Pass away	Fight off	Pass out
Come to	Come down with	Get over

3.1 Glossary

Types of illnesses and other health problems

Smallpox: a contagious illness which caused fever, skin damage and even death.

Chickenpox: a contagious illness, especially of children, which cause spots on the skin and in some cases a mild fever.

Flu: an illness similar to a cold but more serious. It causes fever, muscle pain and weakness.

Measles: an infectious disease which causes small red spots all over the body.

Mumps: an infectious disease which causes neck inflammation.

Sore throat: a condition in which your throat hurts.

Headache: a medical condition characterised by a pain in someone's head.

Fever: a medical condition characterised by high body temperature.

Rash: red spots on your skin caused by an allergic reaction or a disease.

Nouns

Disease: a sickness.

Syndrome: a combination of symptoms of a particular mental or physical illness.

Disorder: a mental or physical disease.

Vaccine: the introduction of a substance to protect people from certain diseases.

Pill: a small piece of medicine we swallow.

Injury: a wound on someone's body.

Injection: to put a substance using a needle into a patient's body.

Prescription: a piece of paper on which a doctor writes everything a patient's needs.

Adjectives

Catching: an illness can easily be spread among people.

Contagious: a kind of illness that people can get by contact.

Infectious: a kind of illness which can be spread from one person to another.

Mild: a non-serious illness.

Painful: something which hurts or causes pain.

Painless: something which causes no pain.

Idioms

Sick as a dog: to be very sick.

To feel under the weather: to feel not very well.

As pale as a ghost: to be extremely pale.

At death's door: to be close to death.

On one's last legs: old or in bad health condition.

Alive and kicking: someone who is healthy again after having had some healthy problems.

Blue around the gills: someone who looks sick.

Phrasal verbs

Pass away: to die.

Fight off: to fight against a disease.

Pass out: to become unconscious.

Come to: to come back to consciousness.

Come down with: to become ill.

Get over: to recover from an illness.

4. Grammar

In this section, we are going to study present perfect simple and present perfect continuous. We are going to focus on the structure, the use of these verb tenses and some useful words and phrases that can help us identify either the simple or the progressive form.

4.1 Present perfect simple

Structure

To form the present perfect tense in statements, we need the auxiliary verb "have" or "has" (third-person-singular) and the main verb must be a past participle:

Affirmative → Subject + HAVE/HAS + Past Participle

*"Susan and Bill **have known** each other since they were young."*

*"My boss **has hired** three employees so far."*

In negative sentences, it is necessary to negate the auxiliary verb “haven’t/have not” or “hasn’t/has not” and just like in the statements, we need the past participle of the main verb.

Negative → Subject + HAVEN’T/HASN’T + Past participle

*“I’m a little worried, Sarah **hasn’t arrived** yet.”*

*“I **haven’t carried** the boxes this morning.”*

To make questions, it is important to change the order between the subject and the auxiliary verb “have” or “has” and the main verb is again a past participle.

Interrogative → HAVE/HAS + subject + Past participle?

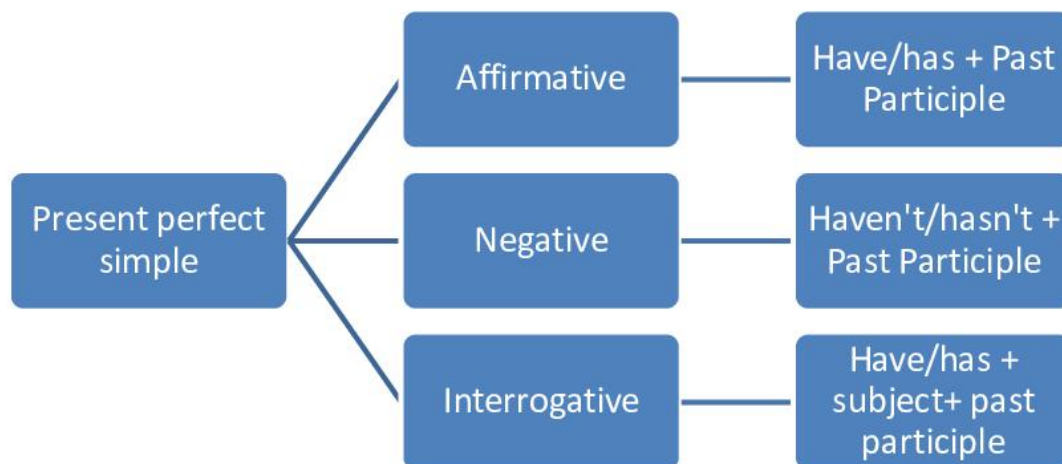
*“**Have you seen** George these days?”*

*“Where **have you been** today?”*

Use

1. To talk about actions in the past which continue in the present time: “I **have lost** my wallet.” (It is still lost. I haven’t found it yet.). “I **have worked** as a teacher since 1995” (I’m still a teacher.)
2. To talk about experiences: “**Have you ever been** to Paris?” “No, I **have never been** abroad.”
3. To talk about repeated actions: “My little brother **has broken** his leg three times.” “I **have watched** Titanic twice this week.”

Summing up



4.2 Present perfect continuous

Structure

Like in the present perfect simple, we need the auxiliary verb "have" or "has" but this time we need the past participle of the verb "to be" (been) and the -ing form of the main verb.

Affirmative → Subject + HAVE/HAS + BEEN + V. ING

"They **have been waiting** for us for almost two hours!" "I **have been working** in Italy for ten years so far."

To make negative sentences we only need to negate the auxiliary verb "haven't/have not" or "hasn't"/"has not" plus the past participle of "to be" and the -ing form of the main verb.

Negative → Subject + HAVEN'T/HASN'T + BEEN + V.ING

"Susan **hasn't been working** out lately." "My nephews **haven't been playing** in the park all day"

Interrogative sentences are made by changing the order between the auxiliary verb "have" or "has" and the subject, like the present perfect simple, we also need the past participle of the verb "to be" and the -ing form of the main verb.

Interrogative → HAVE/HAS + Subject + BEEN + V.ING?

"**Have you been working** all this time?" "How long **has she been working** in the same enterprise?"

Uses

1. We use it to emphasise the duration of an action which started in the past but it is still in progress: "I **have been working** as a police officer for almost two decades." "They **have been working** on the task all day."

2. We use it to talk about actions which have recently stopped: "I'm exhausted, I **have been running** for an hour." "You are sweating, **have you been working** out?"

3. We use it for actions happening recently: "Paul speaks Russian more fluently, he **has been studying** harder lately." "My son **has been playing** in the mud, his hands are dirty."

We only use present perfect continuous with active verbs, on the contrary, we use the present perfect simple with stative verbs (know, believe, like, etc.).

Time expressions we use with perfect tenses: already, just, yet, never, ever, recently, lately, before, still, so far, today, this morning/week, for, since.

Examples:

"I **have already finished** the task."

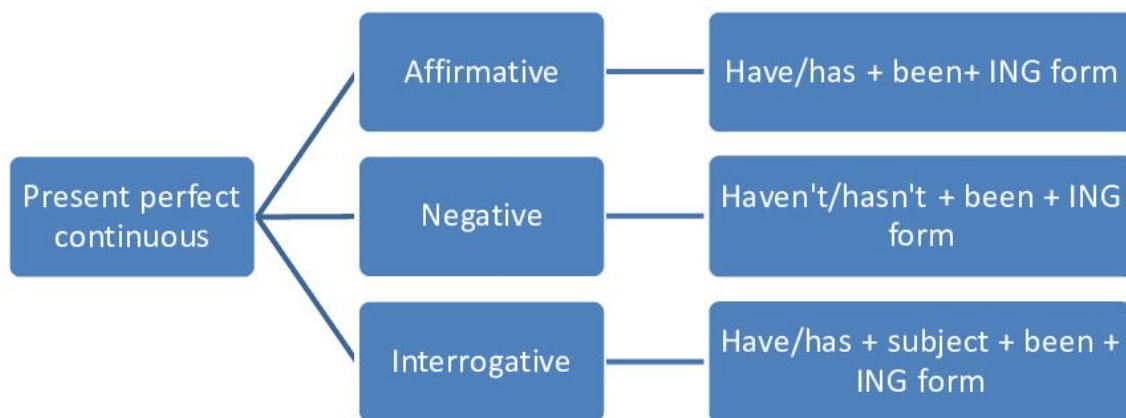
"They **haven't called** their parents yet."

"They **have been dancing** for two hours."

"She **has worked** as a nurse since she was only 23."

"Paul **has been traveling** to different countries lately."

Summing up



4.3 For and since

“For” indicates a period of time → for ages, for three weeks, for two months, for a long time, for centuries, for ten years, etc. → “Peter hasn’t seen Mary **for 2 years.**”

“Since” expresses a specific moment when a period of time started → since Monday, since 1998, since I was a baby, since school years, since June, etc. → “Peter hasn’t seen Mary **since 2018.**”

4.4 Already, yet and just

“Already” is used in affirmative sentences to express an action which has finished earlier than expected → “I can leave work now, I have **already** finished my task.”

“Just” is also used in affirmative sentences to express an action which has recently finished → “I’m not thirsty, I have **just** had a glass of juice.”

“Yet” is placed at the end of negative and interrogative sentences when someone hasn’t finished something or hasn’t done anything they were expected to do → “Paul hasn’t cleaned his bedroom **yet.**”

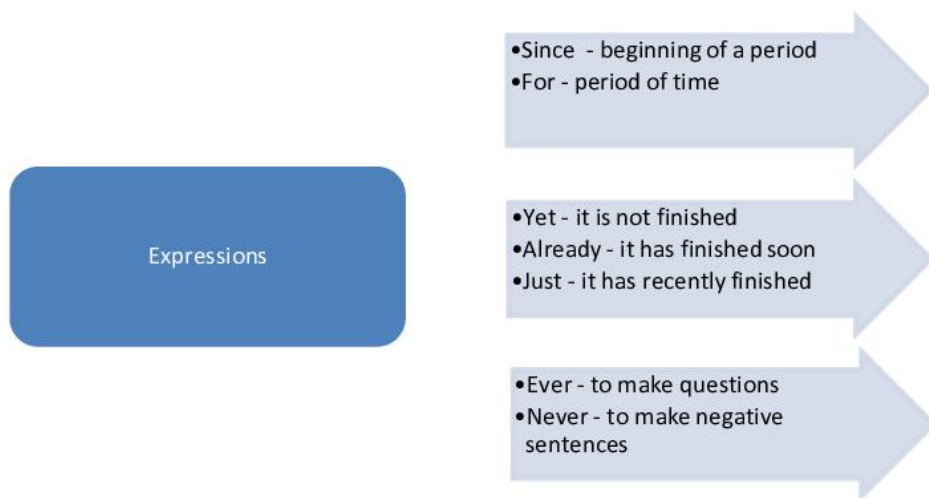
4.5 Ever and never

“Ever” is used in interrogative sentences to make questions about life’s experience. “Have you **ever** run into a famous person?” “Have you **ever** tasted Thai food?” “Has Lisa **ever** studied German?”

“Never” is used when we do not have any experience → “I have **never** tasted Thai food.”, “I have **never** run into a famous person.”, “Lisa has **never** studied German.”

Remember! We use present perfect tenses to talk about actions which have a connection between the past and the present. It is formed with the auxiliary verb “have” and “past participle” and “have” and “been + ing” with the progressive form.

Summing up



5. Writing: Sick and tired

Nowadays, discursive essays are really important and common type of writing. We use them to present our views and opinions on a topic. We are asked to write on the cons and pros of that topic. In this section, we will learn how to write them.

What is a discursive essay?

A discursive essay, also known as for-and-against essay, is a text where we give some advantages and disadvantages about a specific topic. We can argue either against or for the topic, or we can just give our opinions and ideas on both sides in a balanced way.

Structure

It is important to organize our essay in several sections to give the readers clear and well-structured information. Thus, as in most types of essays, we should write a title. After the title, the structure would consist of:

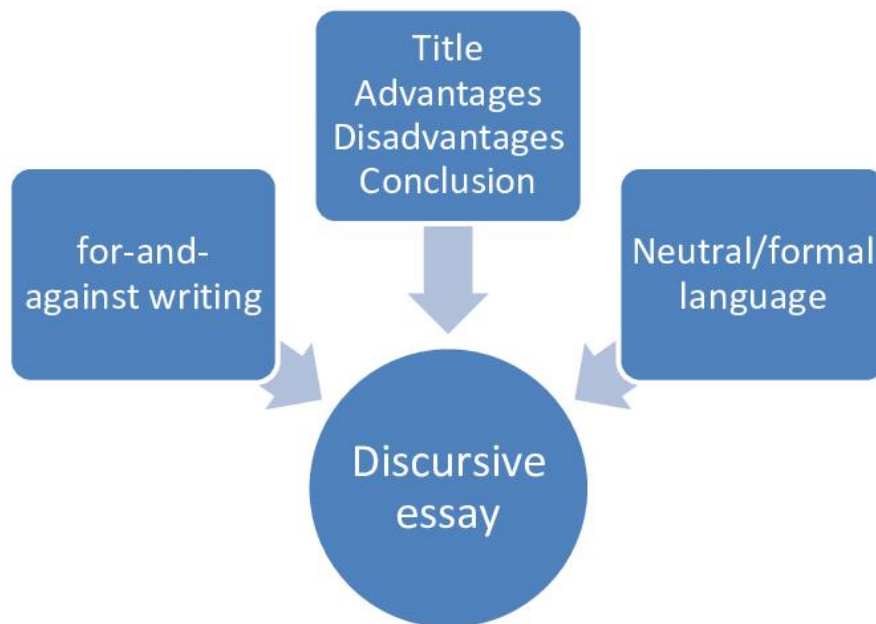
1. Introduction → We should try to write a remarkable and concise introduction about the topic we are going to develop in the next lines. After the introduction, we would start building our arguments.
2. Arguments for → We must present the main advantages we can find about the topic.
3. Arguments against → We must share our ideas against the topic.
4. Conclusion → You shouldn't add new information. Try to summarise your points and give your opinions.

Language

Try not to use very colloquial or informal language by avoiding the use of slangs, idioms and contractions. The use of phrasal verbs is not required in a formal text, so you should substitute them with formal or neutral words. Try to use passives, conditionals and modal verbs instead.

The use of connectors and linking words (however, nevertheless, in addition, so that, etc.) is also required in this kind of writings in order to link words, phrases and sentences and establish semantic relationships among the paragraphs.

The next mind map summarizes the main points mentioned above:



An example of a discursive essay:

Sick and tired

Introduction

Anxiety is a mental disorder, which is the order of the day. Many people find themselves under stress and they consequently suffer from anxiety as they worry about their future, money, work and family. Not everybody pays special attention to mental illnesses, and they do not even realise the importance of having a healthy mind.

For arguments

The anxiety is a state of increased alertness that makes us more aware of things happening around us. It is not dangerous to feel a little anxious sometimes, actually, it makes us be human beings. In addition, working under pressure and under stressful situations, could increase some people productivity in the workplace. In addition, many employees may agree that being under pressure, far from being a problem, is a stimulus to work more efficiently.

Against arguments

However, anxiety becomes a problem when we start to experience it more often than usual. As a result, people suffering from severe anxiety get overwhelmed more easily than others. Not only do people feel overwhelmed but also, they face mental exhaustion and physical fatigue. Moreover, this tiredness can cause other physical and mental illnesses such as depression, obesity or diabetes among others.

Conclusion

In conclusion, our body gives us signs when something is wrong and we should take them into consideration. It is essential to know how to manage our emotions and anxiety in order to overcome life's challenges.

Key ideas

In English, like in all languages, it is not enough to learn the grammar. If you want to master a language you must focus on different skills.

Let's see a summary of what you have learnt in this unit:

- One of the best ways to learn a language is by reading. By reading a text you acquire new vocabulary. However, reading is not only about learning the meaning of unknown words but also learning the spellings. Sometimes we are convinced that a word is spelled right but actually it isn't and the only way we can correct that is by reading a lot. In this unit, you have found a text about an important doctor and his discovery. This helps us learn more complex vocabulary and structure.
- In this unit, we have learnt vocabulary related to illness. It is of great importance to know vocabulary from different fields, otherwise you would be stuck and you wouldn't be able to participate in different conversations. If you learn words related to illness, you can express how you feel.
- The order of the words in a sentence, verb tenses and other syntax aspects are significant in the acquisition of a second language in order to be understood. English learners find hard the use of present perfect simple, and it is also difficult for us to distinguish between the simple and the progressive forms. This section has helped us understand these two important verb tenses.
- In this unit, we have learnt to write a discursive essay which might be useful for us if we have to compare two different ideas, or contrast two elements by taking into account the positive and the negative aspects.