

UNIT 7

Present Perfect Continuous



*How long has Karen been reading the book?
She has been reading the book for three hours.*



*She is tired. Has she been playing?
No, she hasn't.
She has been studying for two hours.*

We form the present perfect continuous with the auxiliary verb **have/has**, the past participle of the verb to **be (been)** and the main verb with the **-ing** suffix.
e.g. *He has been reading his newspaper for an hour.*

We form questions by putting **have/has** before the subject.

e.g. *Have you been living here long?*

We form negations by putting **not** between **have/has** and **been**.

e.g. *They have not/haven't been waiting for a long time.
She has not/hasn't been working here long.*

Affirmative

Long form Short form

I	have	've	} been studying.
He/She/It	has	's	
You/We/They	have	've	

Interrogative

Have	I	} been studying?
Has	he/she/it	
Have	you/we/they	

Negative

Long form Short form

I	have not	haven't	} been studying.
He/She/It	has not	hasn't	
You/We/They	have not	haven't	

1

In pairs, ask and answer questions using the prompts given, as in the example.

SA: *How long has Sam been working for this company?*

SB: *He has been working for this company for two years.*

- Sam / work / for this company / two years
- Mary / teach / French / 1990
- the robbers / hide / in a farmhouse / a week
- Peter / make / model planes / 1992
- Julie / play / the guitar / four years
- the children / watch / TV / two hours

2

Put the verbs in brackets into the correct form of the present perfect continuous.

- What ...*have you been doing*... all week? (you/ do)
- his car all day? (Jim/repair)
- I this book for weeks. (read)
- a lot this year? (Ben/swim)
- Mr Bell is busy. He on the phone for an hour. (talk)
- I've got a penfriend. I to her for five years. (write)
- John won't pass his exams. He any homework lately. (not/do)
- Molly with me since last month. (stay)
- We on this project since December. (work)
- Sam how to ride a horse for three months. (learn)

Present Perfect Continuous

Use

We use the present perfect continuous for:

- ◆ an action which started in the past and continues up to the present.



*He **has been painting** the house for three days. (He began painting the house three days ago and he is still painting it.)*

- ◆ an action which has recently finished and its result is evident now.



*They're tired. They **have been painting** the garage door all morning. (They have just finished painting and the result is evident now. The paint on the door is still wet and the two people look tired.)*

Note: 1) We use the present perfect simple instead of the present perfect continuous with **non-continuous verbs** (know, believe, like, etc.).

*e.g. I've **known** Sharon since we were at school together. (NOT: I've been knowing Sharon since we were at school together.)*

- 2)** With the verbs **live, feel** and **work** we can use the present perfect continuous or the present perfect simple with no difference in meaning.
- e.g. He **has been living**/has lived here since 1994.*

Time Expressions

Time expressions used with the present perfect continuous include:

for, since, all morning/afternoon/week/day, etc., how long (in questions)

3

Match Column A with Column B to make correct sentences.

A

B

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1 How long have you been waiting? | a He's been planting trees all day. |
| 2 Bill is in the garden. | b That's why she's lost weight. |
| 3 You've been studying all morning. | c It's been snowing all day. |
| 4 Anne's been exercising a lot recently. | d She's been working hard all week. |
| 5 It's cold outside. | e I think it's time to stop now. |
| 6 Jenny's tired. | f For ten minutes. |
| 7 We've been practising all afternoon. | g Lots of things. I've been busy. |
| 8 What have you been doing since I last saw you? | h Why don't you take a break? |

4

What have these people been doing? Make sentences using an appropriate verb in the present perfect continuous.

- Catherine went to the supermarket an hour ago. She's still there.
*Catherine **has been shopping** for an hour.*
- My mum began cooking three hours ago. She hasn't finished yet.
- The teams started playing football twenty minutes ago. They haven't finished yet.
- The headmaster started speaking two hours ago. He hasn't stopped yet.
- Bill began building his house six months ago. He hasn't finished it yet.
- I started doing my homework three hours ago. I haven't finished it yet.

5

In pairs, ask and answer questions using the prompts given, as in the example.

SA: *What's your favourite hobby?*

SB: *Painting.*

SA: *How long have you been painting?*

SB: *I've been painting since I was fourteen years old.*

- favourite hobby
- best friend / know
- favourite TV programme / watch
- your address / live
- favourite magazine / read

6

Fill in the gaps with one of the verbs from the list in the present perfect continuous.

work, snow, exercise, play



- 1 Everything is white outside. It *hasn't been snowing*... all night.



- 2 He is hot. He for two hours.



- 3 They are tired. They volleyball all afternoon.



- 4 He has got a headache. He hard all morning.

7

Put the verbs in brackets into the present perfect continuous.

- A: Hi Liz. You look exhausted. 1) *...Have you been working...* (you/work) overtime again?
 B: Yes, I have. I 2) (help) my boss to update the files in the office all week. He 3) (read) the files and I 4) (write) down names, addresses, phone numbers and so on. What about you?
 A: Well, I 5) (train) hard for the championship next week.
 B: I see! 6) (you/lift) weights all day long?
 A: Yes, for two weeks. How's Sue? 7) (she/study) for her exams?
 B: No, she hasn't. She 8) (go) out every evening. I won't be surprised if she fails again!

Short Answers

e.g. Have you been working hard? Yes, I have.

Have you ...?	Yes, I/we have.	No, I/we haven't.
Has he/she/it ...?	Yes, he/she/it has.	No, he/she/it hasn't.
Have they ...?	Yes, they have.	No, they haven't.

8

Look at the pictures. In pairs, ask and answer questions using the prompts below, as in the example.

SA: Have people been taking photos since 1751?

SB: No, they haven't. They've been taking photos since 1851.

1851



- 1 take photos/1751

1894



- 2 listen to the radio/1824

1791



- 3 ride bicycles/1771

1903



- 4 travel by plane/1903

1856



- 6 use fridges/1836

1450



- 5 print books/1450

1878



- 7 use light bulbs/1868

1809



- 8 store food in tins/1709

Present Perfect Continuous versus Present Perfect Simple

Present Perfect Continuous

We use the present perfect continuous:

- for an action which started in the past and continues up to the present.



Mr Davis **has been teaching** for six years.
(He began working as a teacher six years ago and he still is.)

- to put emphasis on the duration of an action.



She **has been painting** this picture for two hours.
(She started two hours ago and she is still painting it.)

Present Perfect Simple

We use the present perfect simple:

- for an action which has just finished.



They **have just made** a deal.

- to put emphasis on number.



He **has painted** twenty pictures.

9 Put the verbs in brackets into the present perfect continuous or the present perfect simple.

- A: Amanda ...*has opened*... (open) a shop which sells newspapers and magazines.
B: Really? Where is it?
- A: Where's Dan?
B: He (just/go) to the post office. He'll be back soon.
- A: Dave (learn) to drive for six months.
B: I know. He hasn't passed his test yet, though.
- A: I (know) Alison for ten years.
B: Well, I only met her last week.
- A: My uncle is painting his house again.
B: Again? He (paint) it three times this year already.
- A: Is Paul sleeping?
B: Yes, he (sleep) since 10 o'clock last night.

10 Mary is reading some letters. Put the verbs in brackets into the present perfect continuous or the present perfect simple.

- A** ... I'm planning to buy a new house. I 1) ...*'ve been looking*... (look) for one for two months now.
So far I 2) (look) at ten houses, but I 3) (not/find) one I like.
- B** ... My Spanish lessons are going very well. I 1) (learn) Spanish for five months now and I love it. I 2) (already/learn) a lot.
- C** ... John 1) (be) very busy recently. He 2) (paint) the living-room and the bedrooms, but he 3) (not/ start) painting the kitchen yet.

11

Put the verbs in brackets into the present perfect continuous or the present perfect simple.



- A: Good evening and welcome to our show. Tonight we have Steve Connolly, the well-known director. We're glad to have you here Steve. What 1) *...have you been doing...* (do) lately?
- B: Well, I 2) (finish) my latest film, "Double Crossing".
- A: That 3) (just/come out) at the cinemas, hasn't it?
- B: Yes. The papers 4) (give) it good reviews. I hope they'll like my next film too.
- A: 5) (you/decide) what it'll be about?
- B: Yes, I 6) (read) an exciting book over the last few weeks and I want to make it into a film. I 7) (not/decide) where to film it yet, perhaps Moscow.
- A: Aha! Is it true that you 8) (recently/start) learning Russian?
- B: Yes, I 9) (study) it for three years now and I 10) (visit) the country twice.
- A: Steve, thank you very much for being with us, and good luck with your new film.

12

Fill in the blanks with time expressions from the list below.

since, all morning, already, how long, for, ever, yet, so far, just, always

- The baby has been crying *...all morning...*
- Simon hasn't started school
- She has washed the clothes, so they are still wet.
- Martha has wanted to go to Mexico.

- She has been ill a week.
- has he been at home?
- It's very early, but Richard has gone to work.
- I've sent ten party invitations
- I haven't spoken French 1990.
- Have you appeared on television?

IN OTHER WORDS

Study these examples. The second sentence has a similar meaning to the first sentence.

- Helen started learning French four months ago.
has Helen **has been learning French for** four months.
- They haven't paid the bills yet.
still They **still haven't paid** the bills.
- When did you buy your car?
since How long is it **since you bought** your car?

13

Complete each sentence with two to five words including the word in bold.

- When did Paul sell his house?
since How long is it *...since Paul sold his...* house?
- Mark started playing the guitar three years ago.
has Mark playing the guitar for three years.
- The children haven't finished their homework yet.
still The children their homework.
- When did you last decorate your living-room?
since How long is it your living-room?
- We haven't called the plumber yet.
still We the plumber.

14

Correct the mistakes.

- I have looked for him all day. I can't find him.
- He has trying to fix the car all morning.
- I have buying lots of food this week.
- I not have brought any shampoo.
- It has been snowed, but it's stopped now.
- How long they have been cleaning the house?
- I've been knowing Lillian for two years.
- Have you cried? Your eyes are red.