

The present perfect  
continuous

# The present perfect continuous: form

The present perfect continuous is formed with the present perfect of *be*, and the *-ing* form of the verb.

*I've been waiting here all morning.*

*What have you been doing lately?*

*I haven't been sleeping well recently.*

Affirmative form		Interrogative form			Negative form	
... + <b>have/has been</b> + <b>IV</b>		<b>Have/Has ... been</b> + <b>IV</b> ?			... <b>have/has not been</b> + <b>IV</b>	
<b>I have</b> (=I've) <b>been playing</b> .		<b>Have I been playing</b> ?			<b>I have not</b> (=I haven't) <b>been playing</b> .	
He She It	<b>has been playing</b> =(...' <b>s been playing</b> )	<b>Has</b>	he she it	<b>been playing</b> ?	He She It	<b>has not been playing</b> =( <b>hasn't been playing</b> )
We You They	<b>have been playing</b> =(...' <b>ve been playing</b> )	<b>Have</b>	we you they	<b>been playing</b> ?	We You They	<b>have not been playing</b> =( <b>haven't been playing</b> )

# The present perfect continuous: meaning

- 1) The present perfect continuous, like the present perfect, describes past events which are connected to the present. But in the continuous form there is a meaning of an action or situation in progress.

*What have you been doing lately?*

*I've been working a lot.*

*How long have you been living here.*

2) The present perfect continuous can emphasize the length of time of the action.

*I've been waiting here all morning.*

*I've been feeling ill for weeks.*

3) The present perfect continuous can emphasize that the action is temporary.

*I've been staying in a hotel for the past month.*

4) The present perfect continuous can be used for repeated action.

*I've been phoning her for days, but she's never at home.*

5) The action may be finished or continuing, we only know by the situation.

*Carlos has been studying English for two years and now he's stopped! What a shame.*

*Carlos has been studying English for two years. He's going to do an exam next year.*

# Time expressions

Typical time expressions that are used with the present perfect continuous include:

*all day*

*for*

*since*

*all morning*

*lately*

*for days*

*for ages*

*already*

*recently*

*yet*

# Present perfect or present perfect continuous

- We often use the present perfect if our attention is on the finished result, but the present perfect continuous if our attention is on the action.

*I've written that email to Jackie. I was meaning to do it for ages.*

*I've been writing that email to Jackie and it's taken an hour! I'm exhausted!*



- If we give details of how many or how much we do not use a continuous form.

*I've written four emails.*

*I've done a lot of cooking and cleaning this afternoon.*

# Exercises

1. **Underline the correct form or phrase in each sentence.**
  - a) *I'm standing here/I've been standing here for hours and I feel tired.*
  - b) *Have you read /Have you been reading that newspaper yet?  
Can I have it?*
  - c) *How long have you been cleaning /have you cleaned that car?*
  - d) *How long have you known/have you been knowing Rosa?*
  - e) *He is living/has been living in Manchester since 1990.*
  - f) *I'm sorry I'm late. How long have you been waiting/are you waiting?*

2. Put each verb in brackets into either the Present Continuous or Present Perfect Continuous.

1. Maria \_\_\_\_\_ (learn) English for two years.

Maria has been learning English for two years.

2. Hello, Tom. I \_\_\_\_\_ (look) for you all morning. Where have you been?

Hello, Tom. I have been looking for you all morning. Where have you been?

3. Why \_\_\_\_\_ (you/look) at me like that? Stop it!

Why are you looking at me like that? Stop it!

4. We always go to Ireland for our holidays. We \_\_\_\_\_ (go) there for years.

We always go to Ireland for our holidays. We have been going there for years.

7. Sarah is very tired. She \_\_\_\_\_ (work) very hard recently.

Sarah is very tired. She has been working very hard recently.

3. Underline the errors in these sentences. Rewrite each sentence.

a) “What have you been doing all day?” “I’ve been written letters.”

“What have you been doing all day?” “I’ve been **writing** letters.”

b) I’ve been feeling ill three weeks ago.

I **felt** ill three weeks ago.

c) I wait here for ages. Where have you been?

**I’ve been waiting** here for ages. Where have you been?

#### 4. Translate into English.

- 1) Моя дочь говорит по телефону. Она говорит по телефону уже целый час.

*My daughter is speaking on the phone. She has already been speaking on the phone the whole hour.*

- 2) Что ты делаешь? – Я смотрю телевизор. Я смотрю телевизор уже больше пяти часов.

*What are you doing? – I am watching TV. I have already been watching TV for more than five hours.*

- 3) Где он? – Он библиотеке. Он работает. Он там работает с утра.

*Where is he? – He is at the library. He is working. He has been working there since the morning.*

- 4) Как давно ты водишь машину? – Я вожу машину уже более десяти лет.

*How long have you been driving a car? – I have already been driving the car for more than ten years.*

- 5) Я жду тебя с двух часов. Где ты был?

*I have been waiting for you since two o'clock. Where have you been?*