

Grammar reference

1

PRESENT PERFECT SIMPLE AND CONTINUOUS

Present perfect simple: *have* + past participle

positive	negative	question
I've read the article in a newspaper.	She hasn't had lunch.	Have they arrived yet?

Present perfect continuous: *have been* + present participle

positive	negative	question
I've been watching the match.	She hasn't been waiting long.	Have they been working with you?

Both the **present perfect simple** and **present perfect continuous** talk about something which started in the past.

- The present perfect simple is a completed action which has a result in the present:
She's passed her driving test, so now she can take the children to the day care centre herself.
- The present perfect continuous is an action which is still happening now:
They've been working hard on their presentation, but it isn't finished yet.

The two tenses are often very similar in their usage. However:

present perfect simple	present perfect continuous
<ul style="list-style-type: none">emphasises the result: <i>They've worked on the environmental project all week and they're going to present the final version tomorrow.</i>focuses on how much of an activity is complete: <i>I've listened to all of the audio novels you recommended.</i>may give the idea that something is permanent (and may be accompanied by a time expression which shows this): <i>She's been a lecturer in the science department for well over twenty years and she is still actively involved in research.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">emphasises the action: <i>They've been working on the environmental project all week, but they've still got some way to go.</i>focuses on how long an activity has been in progress: <i>I've been listening to the audio novels you recommended and I've still got two left.</i>may give the idea that something is temporary (and may be accompanied by a time expression which shows this): <i>She's been working here part-time this week, but she goes back to her normal job on Monday.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">focuses on how many times an action has been repeated: <i>We've watched that programme about celebrities several times.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">focuses on the process of change over a period of time and that the changes are not finished: <i>My use of grammar has been getting more accurate since I started testing myself.</i>

Note:

Some verbs are not used in the continuous form, e.g. *know*, *hate*, *understand*, *want*.

I've known Guy for a long time. (NOT: *I've been knowing Guy for a long time.*)

I've understood everything you've outlined. (NOT: *I've been understanding everything you've outlined.*)

PRACTICE

1 Complete the sentences with either the present perfect simple or continuous form of the verbs in brackets.

- 1 I (prepare) my presentation on mammals all week, but I (not finish) it yet.
- 2 What (you do)? Your hands are covered in dirt.
- 3 Your parents (look) exhausted recently. Have they (work) too much?
- 4 I (not complete) my essay yet, because I (chill out) in the garden for over an hour.
- 5 Have you got a plaster? I (do) some work around the house and I (damage) the nail on my thumb quite badly.
- 6 I (be) to Spain several times this year. Every visit was really outstanding.
- 7 Recently the government (become) more aware of the need to promote music education.
- 8 I (change) a wheel on my car, so I'm not really in the mood to go out.

2 Tick the correct sentences. Correct the sentences with mistakes.

- 1 The surgeon has just finished a nine-hour operation, so he's exhausted.
- 2 We have lived in Berlin for two years and before that we lived in London for five years.
- 3 I have finally been learning how to use the passive in English. I feel over the moon that I can do it at last.
- 4 I can see that he has eaten too much recently. He's gained a lot of weight.

- 5 The rain has been pouring down all day, so I chose to stay indoors.
- 6 They haven't mastered Chinese, but they can communicate at a basic level. That's an incredible achievement!
- 7 They have browsed for jobs in sport management for over four hours and still haven't found anything.
- 8 I have gone to the weight lifting session every weekend for years.

3 Make sentences with either the present perfect simple or continuous.

- 1 Scientists / discover / vaccines / to cure / many fatal illnesses.
- 2 He / not put / his recent qualifications on his CV / yet.
- 3 Wake up! You / sleep for / over two hours now.
- 4 We all feel thirsty, / because / as usual / not / drink enough / during training.
- 5 She / know him / since / he was a small child.
- 6 It snow / heavily / all morning / and as a result / the roads / are slippery now.