Present perfect 1 (I have done)

Study this example situation:

Tom is looking for his key. He can't find it.
He **has lost** his key.

He **has lost** his key = He lost it recently, and he still doesn't have it.

Have/has lost is the *present perfect simple*:

I/we/they/you	**have**	(= I've etc.)	**finished** **lost** **done** **been** etc.
he/she/it	**has**	(= he's etc.)	

The present perfect simple is **have/has** + *past participle*. The past participle often ends in **-ed** (finish**ed**/decid**ed** etc.), but many important verbs are *irregular* (**lost/done/written** etc.).

For a list of irregular verbs, see Appendix 1.

When we say that 'something **has happened**', this is usually new information:

- Ow! **I've cut** my finger.
- The road is closed. There**'s been** (there **has** been) an accident.
- (*from the news*) Police **have arrested** two men in connection with the robbery.

When we use the present perfect, there is a connection with *now*. The action in the past has a result *now*:

- 'Where's your key?' 'I don't know. **I've lost** it.' (= I don't have it *now*)
- He told me his name, but **I've forgotten** it. (= I can't remember it *now*)
- 'Is Sally here?' 'No, she**'s gone** out.' (= she is out *now*)
- I can't find my bag. **Have** you **seen** it? (= Do you know where it is *now*?)

You can use the present perfect with **just, already** and **yet**.

Just = a short time ago:

- 'Are you hungry?' 'No, **I've just had** lunch.'
- Hello. **Have** you **just arrived**?

We use **already** to say that something happened sooner than expected:

- 'Don't forget to send the letter.' '**I've already sent** it.'
- 'What time is Mark leaving?' '**He's already gone**.'

Yet = until now. **Yet** shows that the speaker is expecting something to happen. Use **yet** only in questions and negative sentences:

- **Has** it **stopped** raining **yet**?
- I've written the letter, but I **haven't sent** it **yet**.

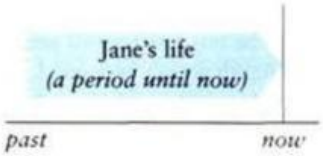
Note the difference between **gone (to)** and **been (to)**:

- Jim is on holiday. He **has gone to** Italy. (= he is there now or on his way there)
- Jane is back home now. She **has been** to Italy. (= she has now come back)

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Study this example conversation:

DAVE: **Have** you **travelled** a lot, Jane?
JANE: Yes, **I've been** to lots of places.
DAVE: Really? **Have** you ever **been** to China?
JANE: Yes, **I've been** to China twice.
DAVE: What about India?
JANE: No, **I haven't been** to India.



When we talk about a period of time that continues from the past until now, we use the *present perfect* (**have been / have travelled** etc.). Here, Dave and Jane are talking about the places Jane has visited in her life (which is a period that continues until now).

Some more examples:

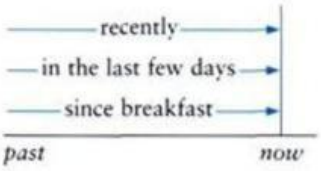
- **Have** you ever **eaten** caviar? (in your life)
- **We've** never **had** a car.
- '**Have** you **read** *Hamlet*?' 'No, **I haven't read** any of Shakespeare's plays.'
- Susan really loves that film. **She's seen** it eight times!
- What a boring film! It's the most boring film **I've ever seen.**

Been (to) = visited:

- I've never **been to** China. Have you **been** there?

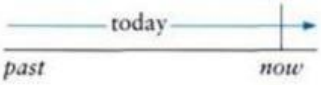
In the following examples too, the speakers are talking about a period that continues until now (**recently / in the last few days / so far / since breakfast** etc.):

- **Have** you **heard** from Brian **recently**?
- **I've met** a lot of people **in the last few days.**
- Everything is going well. **We haven't had** any problems **so far.**
- I'm hungry. **I haven't eaten** anything **since breakfast.** (= from breakfast until now)
- It's good to see you again. **We haven't seen** each other **for a long time.**



We use the present perfect with **today / this evening / this year** etc. when these periods are not finished at the time of speaking (see also Unit 14B):

- **I've drunk** four cups of coffee **today.**
- **Have** you **had** a holiday **this year** (yet)?
- **I haven't seen** Tom **this morning. Have** you?
- Rob **hasn't studied** very hard **this term.**



We say: It's the (first) time something **has happened.** For example:

- Don is having a driving lesson. It's his first one. It's the first time he **has driven** a car. (*not* drives)

or He **has never driven** a car **before.**

- Sarah has lost her passport again. This is the second time this **has happened.** (*not* happens)
- Bill is phoning his girlfriend again. That's the third time he's **phoned** her **this evening.**

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Present perfect continuous (I have been doing)

It has been raining

Study this example situation:

Is it raining?
No, but the ground is wet.

It **has been raining**.

Have/has been -ing is the *present perfect continuous*:

I/we/they/you	**have**	(= I've etc.)	**been**	doing waiting playing etc.
he/she/it	**has**	(= he's etc.)		

We use the present perfect continuous for an activity that has recently stopped or just stopped. There is a connection with *now*:

- You're out of breath. **Have** you **been running**? (= you're out of breath *now*)
- Paul is very tired. **He's been working** very hard. (= he's tired *now*)
- Why are your clothes so dirty? What **have** you **been doing**?
- **I've been talking** to Amanda about the problem and she agrees with me.
- Where have you been? **I've been looking** for you everywhere.

It has been raining for two hours.

Study this example situation:

It began raining two hours ago and it is still raining.

How long **has** it **been raining**?
It **has been raining** for two hours.

We use the present perfect continuous in this way with **how long**, **for** ... and **since** ... . The activity is still happening (as in this example) or has just stopped.

- **How long have** you **been learning** English? (= you're still learning English)
- Tim is still watching television. **He's been watching** television **all day**.
- Where have you been? **I've been looking** for you **for the last half hour**.
- Chris **hasn't been feeling** well **recently**.

You can use the present prefect continuous for actions repeated over a period of time:

- Debbie is a very good tennis player. **She's been playing since she was eight**.
- Every morning they meet in the same café. **They've been going** there **for years**.

Compare **I am doing** (see Unit 1) and **I have been doing**:

I am doing *present continuous* ↓ *now*	**I have been doing** *present perfect continuous* *now*
Don't disturb me now. **I'm working**.	**I've been working** hard. Now I'm going to have a break.
We need an umbrella. **It's raining**.	The ground is wet. **It's been raining**.
Hurry up! **We're waiting**.	**We've been waiting** for an hour.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Present perfect continuous and simple (I have been doing and I have done)

Study this example situation:

Kate's clothes are covered in paint.
She **has been painting** the ceiling.

Has been painting is the *present perfect continuous*.

We are interested in the activity. It does not matter whether something has been finished or not. In this example, the activity (painting the ceiling) has not been finished.

The ceiling was white. Now it is red.
She **has painted** the ceiling.

Has painted is the *present perfect simple*.

Here, the important thing is that something has been finished. **Has painted** is a completed action. We are interested in the result of the activity (the painted ceiling), not the activity itself.

Compare these examples:

- My hands are very dirty. **I've been repairing** the car.
- Joe **has been eating** too much recently. He should eat less.
- It's nice to see you again. What **have** you **been doing** since we last met?
- Where have you been? **Have** you **been playing** tennis?

- The car is OK again now. **I've repaired** it.
- Somebody **has eaten** all my chocolates. The box is empty.
- Where's the book I gave you? What **have** you **done** with it?
- **Have** you ever **played** tennis?

We use the continuous to say *how long* (for an activity that is still happening):

- How long **have** you **been reading** that book?
- Lisa is still writing letters. She's **been writing** letters **all day**.
- They've **been playing** tennis **since 2 o'clock**.
- I'm learning Spanish, but I **haven't been learning** it very long.

We use the simple to say *how much*, *how many* or *how many times* (for completed actions):

- How much of that book **have** you **read**?
- Lisa **has written** ten letters today.
- They've **played** tennis three times this week.
- I'm learning Spanish, but I **haven't learnt** very much yet.

Some verbs (for example, **know/like/believe**) are not normally used in the continuous:

- **I've known** about it for a long time. (*not* I've been knowing)

For a list of these verbs, see Unit 4A. But note that you *can* use **want** and **mean** in the present perfect continuous:

- **I've been meaning** to phone Jane, but I keep forgetting.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

How long have you (been) ... ?

Study this example situation:

Dan and Jenny are married. They got married exactly 20 years ago, so today is their 20th wedding anniversary.

They **have been** married **for 20 years.**

We say: They **are** married. *(present)*

but **How long have** they **been** married? *(present perfect)*
(*not* How long are they married?)
They **have been** married **for 20 years.**
(*not* They are married for 20 years)

We use the *present perfect* to talk about something that began in the past and still continues now. Compare the *present* and the *present perfect*:

- Bill **is** in hospital.

but He **has been** in hospital **since Monday.**
(*not* Bill is in hospital since Monday)

- **Do** you **know** each other well?

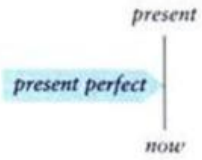
but **Have** you **known** each other **for a long time?**
(*not* Do you know)

- She's **waiting** for somebody.

but She's **been waiting all morning.**

- **Do** they **have** a car?

but **How long have** they **had** their car?



I have known/had/lived etc. is the *present perfect simple*.
I have been learning / been waiting / been doing etc. is the *present perfect continuous*.

When we ask or say 'how long', the continuous is more usual (see Unit 10):

- **I've been learning** English **for six months.**
- **It's been raining since lunchtime.**
- Richard **has been doing** the same job **for 20 years.**
- '**How long have** you **been driving?**' 'Since I was 17.'

Some verbs (for example, **know/like/believe**) are not normally used in the continuous:

- How long **have** you **known** Jane? (*not* have you been knowing)
- **I've had** a pain in my stomach all day. (*not* I've been having)

See also Units 4A and 10C. For **have**, see Unit 17.

You can use either the present perfect continuous or simple with **live** and **work**:

- Julia **has been living / has lived** in Paris for a long time.
- How long **have** you **been working / have** you **worked** here?

But we use the simple (**I've lived / I've done** etc.) with **always**:

- **I've always lived** in the country. (*not* always been living)

We say '**I haven't done** something **since/for** ...' (*present perfect simple*):

- **I haven't seen** Tom since Monday. (= Monday was the last time I saw him)
- Sue **hasn't phoned** for ages. (= the last time she phoned was ages ago)

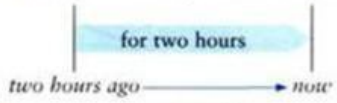
LIVEWORKSHEETS

For and since
When ... ? and How long ... ?

We use **for** and **since** to say how long something has been happening.

We use **for** + a period of time (**two hours, six weeks** etc.):

- I've been waiting **for two hours.**



for		
two hours	a long time	a week
20 minutes	six months	ages
five days	50 years	years

- Sally has been working here **for six months.** (*not* since six months)
- I haven't seen Tom **for three days.** (*not* since three days)

We use **since** + the start of a period (**8 o'clock, Monday, 1999** etc.):

- I've been waiting **since 8 o'clock.**

since		
8 o'clock	April	lunchtime
Monday	1985	we arrived
12 May	Christmas	I got up

- Sally has been working here **since April.** (= from April until now)
- I haven't seen Tom **since Monday.** (= from Monday until now)

It is possible to leave out **for** (but not usually in negative sentences):

- They've been married (for) **ten years.** (with or without **for**)
- They **haven't had** a holiday **for** ten years. (you must use **for**)

We do *not* use **for + all ...** (**all day / all my life** etc.):

- I've lived here **all my life.** (*not* for all my life)

Compare **when ... ?** (+ *past simple*) and **how long ... ?** (+ *present perfect*):

A: **When** did it start raining?
B: It started raining **an hour ago / at 1 o'clock.**

A: **How long** has it been raining?
B: It's been raining **for an hour / since 1 o'clock.**

A: **When** did Joe and Carol first meet?
B: They first met { **a long time ago.** / **when they were at school.** }

A: **How long** have they known each other?
B: They've known each other { **for a long time.** / **since they were at school.** }

We say '**It's** (a long time / two years etc.) **since** something happened':

- **It's two years since** I last saw Joe. (= **I haven't seen** Joe for two years)
- **It's ages since** we went to the cinema. (= We **haven't been** to the cinema for ages)

You can ask '**How long is it since ... ?**':

- **How long is it since** you last saw Joe? (= When did you last see Joe?)
- **How long is it since** Mrs Hill died? (= When did Mrs Hill die?)

You can also say '**It's been** (= It has been) ... **since** ... ':

- **It's been** two years since I last saw Joe.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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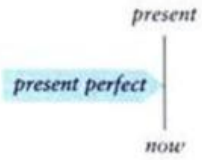

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LIVEWORKSHEETS