

Present Perfect Continuous

Grammar Summary

1 Form

have/has + been + verb-ing	
✓ POSITIVE	✗ NEGATIVE
I/you/we/they have been working he/she/it has been working	I/you/we/they haven't been working he/she/it hasn't been working
? QUESTION	? HOW LONG
Have I/you/we/they been working ? Has he/she/it been working ?	How long have you been working ?

2 When do we use it?

USE	EXAMPLE
Action still in progress	<i>She has been studying for three hours. (She is still studying now.)</i>
Repeated action up to now	<i>He has been playing football since he was six.</i>
Action just finished (with visible result)	<i>I 've been running. That's why I'm out of breath.</i>

3 Time expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
for	a period of time	<i>for two hours / for ages</i>
since	a point in time	<i>since Monday / since 2018</i>
how long	question about duration	<i>How long have you been waiting?</i>
recently / lately	'in the last few days/weeks'	<i>I haven't been sleeping well lately.</i>

4 Watch out!

We do NOT use present simple or present continuous here:

✗ *We wait here for twenty minutes.*

✗ *We're waiting here for twenty minutes.*

✓ *We've **been waiting** here for twenty minutes.*

A

Put in the verbs. Use the Present Perfect Continuous.

Ilona: Sorry I'm late.

Emma: It's OK. (►) I haven't been waiting..... (I / not / wait) long.
What (1) (you / do)?

Ilona: I've been with Mrs King. (2) (she / help) me with my English.

Emma: Your English is very good. You don't need lessons, surely.
How long (3) (you / study) English?

Ilona: Er, eight years now. But my accent wasn't so good before I came to England.
(4) (I / try) to improve it.

I think (5) (it / get) better lately.

Emma: Your accent is fine, Ilona. Honestly.

B

Say what these people have been doing. Use these verbs: *argue, cook, drive, wait, work*



► Andrew is tired because he's been working..... all day.

1 Trevor and Laura are upset because

2 David is hot because

3 Mark feels very stiff because all day.

4 Henry is annoyed. a long time for Claire.

C

What could you say in these situations? Write sentences with the Present Perfect Continuous and a phrase with *for*. Use these verbs: *play, read, swim, talk, travel, work*

► A video is on. It began two hours ago, and it hasn't finished yet.

The video has been playing for two hours.

1 Matthew went into the water an hour ago. He doesn't want to come out yet.

2 Your friends started their journey around the world three months ago. They've gone about halfway now.

3 Mark got to the office early this morning. Ten hours later he's still there.

4 Melanie rang Rita forty minutes ago, and they're still on the phone.

5 Trevor has got an interesting book. He started it quite a long time ago. Ask him how long.

Embedded Questions

Grammar Reference

Embedded questions are questions hidden inside a sentence. In embedded questions, the word order is **statement word order** (subject + verb), NOT question word order.

They often begin with: *I don't know ...*, *I wonder ...*, *Can you tell me ...*, *I have no idea ...*, *I'm not sure ...*, *Do you know ...*

Question Where is the nearest pharmacy?

Embedded question *I don't know where the nearest pharmacy is.*

Question How long does the flight take?

Embedded question *I have no idea how long the flight takes.*

⚠ Remember!

- **Direct question:** *What time does the museum close?*
- **Embedded question:** *Do you know what time the museum closes?*

Exercise 1

Choose the correct sentence in each pair.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1</p> <p>a) I'm not sure how long the concert lasts.
b) I'm not sure how long lasts the concert.</p> <p>2</p> <p>a) Nobody knows when will the results arrive.
b) Nobody knows when the results will arrive.</p> | <p>3</p> <p>a) Can you tell me where is the bus station?
b) Can you tell me where the bus station is?</p> <p>4</p> <p>a) I have no idea why she left the job.
b) I have no idea why did she leave the job.</p> |
|---|--|

Exercise 2

Match the embedded questions (1–5) to the direct questions (a–e).

Embedded questions

- 1 I wonder how much the repair will cost.
- 2 I'm not sure which platform the train leaves from.
- 3 Nobody knows whether the match has been cancelled.
- 4 Can you tell me how far it is to the city centre?
- 5 I have no idea why the manager resigned.

Direct questions

- a) How far is it to the city centre?
- b) Has the match been cancelled?
- c) Why did the manager resign?
- d) How much will the repair cost?
- e) Which platform does the train leave from?

Exercise 3

A friend is asking questions. You don't know the answers. Complete your replies using an embedded question.

- 1 'What's the departure time?' 'Sorry – I don't know what the departure time is.
- 2 'Where does the doctor work?' 'Sorry – I don't know _____'
- 3 'When did the film come out?' 'Sorry – I don't know _____'
- 4 'How much does a room cost?' 'Sorry – I'm not sure _____'
- 5 'Why is the road closed?' 'Sorry – I have no idea _____'
- 6 'Who won the competition?' 'Sorry – I don't know _____'

Exercise 4

Join each pair of sentences to make one sentence using an embedded question. Use the phrase given.

- 1 What time does the pharmacy close? I don't know. (*I don't know ...*)
I don't know what time the pharmacy closes.
- 2 How many people live in this city? I have no idea. (*I have no idea ...*)
→ _____
- 3 Is the museum free on Sundays? Can you tell me? (*Can you tell me ...*)
→ _____
- 4 Where did she study medicine? I wonder. (*I wonder ...*)
→ _____
- 5 Did the flight land on time? I'm not sure. (*I'm not sure ...*)
→ _____
- 6 Why is the office closed today? Nobody knows. (*Nobody knows ...*)
→ _____

1 Complete the sentences using the Present perfect continuous.

- 1 Thomas and Carol (travel) together since the beginning of the year.
- 2 How long (you / collect) stamps?
- 3 The builders (work) day and night to finish the house.
- 4 I (think) about getting a part-time job.
- 5 Amanda (not / live) here for long.

2 Rewrite the sentences using the Present perfect continuous.

- 1 I started revising on Tuesday of last week and I haven't stopped yet.
I have
- 2 We first did English four years ago.
We
- 3 They bought that house in 2006. They still live there now.
They
- 4 She started collecting CDs when she was 12.
She
- 5 Tom bought a new bike on Saturday and he hasn't stopped riding it!
Tom

3 Tick the correct sentences.

- 1 a No one can tell me where can I get a cup of coffee.
b No one can tell me where I can get a cup of coffee.
- 2 a It's hard to understand why he did that.
b It's hard to understand why did he do that.
- 3 a No one knows where he went after the beach trip.
b No one knows where he did go after the beach trip.
- 4 a I have no idea how much does it cost to get in.
b I have no idea how much it costs to get in.
- 5 a We need to check what time the museum opens in the morning.
b We need to check what time does the museum open in the morning.

4 Rewrite the questions as embedded questions.

- 1 What are you doing?
I don't understand
- 2 What time does the film start?
No one seems to know
- 3 What time is it?
I have no idea
- 4 Why was she crying?
I wish I knew
- 5 Where is the nearest police station?
We need to find out

5 Circle the correct answer.

Dear Tina,

I'm sitting here revising for my exams. ¹ *I'm studying / I've been studying* history all morning because that's my first exam. No one seems to know what ² *we can / can we* expect in this exam, so everyone's nervous about it. It's the same with Geography – I have no idea what ³ *will the exam / the exam will* contain. Since the beginning of the year, we've been ⁴ *learned / learning* so many different things that I don't know where to start.

Only our English teacher has given us any idea about what we will be tested on. She said that, because ⁵ *we've / we'd* been learning tenses for the last two months, that's what we should revise. But it's difficult to guess ⁶ *what we / do we* have to do for the other subjects.

Write and tell me what you're up to.

Gill X

6 Write full answers about yourself.

- 1 How long have you been learning English?
.....
- 2 How long have you been living in your present house?
.....
- 3 How long have you been going to your school?
.....
- 4 How long have you been doing your favourite hobby?
.....
- 5 How long have you been wearing the kind of clothes you wear?
.....