

Unit 10

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

A Compare these two situations:



There is paint on Kate's clothes. She **has been painting** her bedroom.

has been painting is the *present perfect continuous*.

We are thinking of the activity. It does not matter whether it has been finished or not. In this example, the activity (painting the bedroom) has not been finished.



The bedroom was green. Now it is yellow. She **has painted** her bedroom.

has painted is the *present perfect simple*.

Here, the important thing is that something has been finished. 'She **has painted**' is a completed action. We are thinking about the *result* of the activity (the painted bedroom), not the activity itself.

B Compare these examples:

- ☐ My hands are very dirty. I've **been repairing** my bike.
- ☐ 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?

- ☐ My bike is OK again now. I've **repaired it**. (= I've finished repairing it)
- ☐ Somebody **has eaten** all the chocolates. The box is empty.
- ☐ Where's the book I gave you? What **have you done** with it?
- ☐ **Have you ever played** tennis?

C

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

- ☐ How long **have you been reading** that book?
- ☐ Amy is writing emails. She's **been writing** emails all morning.
- ☐ They've **been playing** tennis since 2 o'clock.
- ☐ I'm learning Arabic, 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 many pages of that book **have you read**?
- ☐ Amy **has sent** lots of emails this morning.
- ☐ They've **played** tennis three times this week.
- ☐ I'm learning Arabic, but I **haven't learnt** very much yet.

D

Some verbs (for example, **know**) are not normally used in continuous forms (**be + -ing**):

- ☐ I've **known** about the problem for a long time. (*not* I've been knowing)
- ☐ How long **have you had** that camera? (*not* have you been having)

For a list of these verbs, see Unit 4A. For **have**, see Unit 17.

But note that you *can* use **want** and **mean** in the present perfect continuous (**have/has been + -ing**):

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

Read the situation and complete the sentences. Use the verbs in brackets.

1. Tom started reading a book two hours ago. He is still reading it and now he is on page 53.
He _____ for two hours. (read)
He _____ 53 pages so far. (read)
2. Rachel is from Australia. She is travelling round Europe. She began her trip three months ago.
She _____ for three months. (travel)
She _____ six countries so far. (visit)
3. Patrick is a tennis player. He began playing tennis when he was 10 years old. This year he won the national championship again – for the fourth time.
He _____ the national championship four times. (win)
He _____ since he was ten. (play)
4. When they left college, Lisa and Sue started making films together. They still make films.
They _____ films since they left college. (make)
They _____ five films since they left college. (make)

Put the verb into the present perfect simple or continuous.

- 1 Where have you been? _____ (you / play) tennis?
- 2 Look! _____ (somebody / break) that window.
- 3 You look tired. _____ (you / work) hard?
- 4 '_____ (you / ever / work) in a factory?' 'No, never.'
- 5 Where's Lisa? Where _____ (she / go)?
- 6 This is a very old book. _____ (I / have) it since I was a child.
- 7 'Have you been busy?' 'No, _____ (I / watch) TV.'
- 8 My brother is an actor. _____ (he / appear) in several films.
- 9 'Sorry I'm late.' 'That's all right. _____ (I / not / wait) long.'
- 10 Are you OK? You look as if _____ (you / cry).
- 11 'Is it still raining?' 'No, _____ (it / stop).'
- 12 The children are tired now. _____ (they / play) in the garden.
- 13 (I / lose) my phone. _____ (you / see) it?
- 14 (I / read) the book you lent me, but _____ (I / not / finish) it yet. It's really interesting.
- 15 _____ (I / read) the book you lent me, so you can have it back now

Which is right?

- 1 Ben is a friend of mine. I know / I've known him very well. (I know is correct)
- 2 I like your house. How long do you live / have you lived here?
- 3 You'll need an umbrella if you go out now. It's raining / It's been raining.
- 4 The weather is / has been awful since I arrived here.
- 5 I'm sorry I'm late. Are you waiting / Have you been waiting long?
- 6 We've moved. We're living / We've been living in New Street now.
- 7 I met Maria only recently. I don't know / I haven't known her very long.
- 8 Lisa is in Germany. She's / She's been there on a business trip.
- 9 That's a very old bike. How long do you have / have you had it?
- 10 I'm not feeling good. I'm feeling / I've been feeling ill all day