

56 Present perfect or present perfect continuous?



We've been playing since nine o'clock this morning.
We're excited because we've won the competition!

1 General uses

PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS
for an action that happened a short time ago and has a result now: <i>He's broken his leg</i> (and can't play football today).	to explain a present situation: <i>He's muddy because he's been playing football.</i>
for a finished action in the past, to answer <i>How much/many?</i> : <i>We've played six games.</i>	for an action that is still continuing or has just finished, to answer <i>How long?</i> : <i>We've been playing since nine o'clock.</i>
for a situation that is still continuing, and that we think is permanent, usually with <i>for</i> or <i>since</i> : <i>The castle has stood here for 800 years.</i>	for a situation that is still continuing, and that we think is temporary, usually with <i>for</i> or <i>since</i> : <i>I've been standing in this queue for forty minutes!</i>

2 Uses with some verbs

We can use some verbs (e.g. *live, work, teach, study* with *for* or *since*) in the present perfect or present perfect continuous. They mean almost the same:

We've lived in this house since we got married.

or *We've been living in this house since we got married.*

Philip has taught geography at Durham University for fifteen years.

or *Philip has been teaching geography at Durham University for fifteen years.*



We don't use the present perfect continuous with some verbs (e.g. *understand, know, want, be*). We use the present perfect:

✗ ~~*Carly has been knowing Jason for two years.*~~

✓ *Carly has known Jason for two years.*

✗ ~~*I've been being much happier recently.*~~

✓ *I've been much happier recently.*

Practice

1 Match the question to the correct answer, A or B.

For one question, both answers are correct.

0 Where's the bus? → A No idea. We've waited for over an hour!
B No idea. We've been waiting for over an hour!

1 These cookies are delicious! Do you make them yourself? → A Yes, I've made about 50 of them today!
B Yes, I've been making about 50 of them today!

2 Where does your brother live? → A In New York at the moment. He's lived there for nearly two months.
B In New York at the moment. He's been living there for nearly two months.

3 Have you met Teresa? → A Yes, we've known each other all our lives.
B Yes, we've been knowing each other all our lives.

4 What's wrong with your feet? → A They're really sore. I've walked all day.
B They're really sore. I've been walking all day.

5 Was this an Oxfam charity event? → A Yes, I've just walked 20 kilometres to raise money.
B Yes, I've just been walking 20 kilometres to raise money.

2 GRAMMAR IN USE Choose the correct words in *italics* in the interview.

INTERVIEWER I'm terribly sorry I'm late, Ms Drake. Have you (0) *been* / *been being* here long?
MS DRAKE No, I've only just (1) *arrived* / *been arriving*. My train was late.

INTERVIEWER OK, let's start. Why do you want to work with Camp America next summer?
MS DRAKE Well, I've just (2) *finished* / *been finishing* a course in sports science and since then I've (3) *looked* / *been looking* for a job with young people. And I've always (4) *wanted* / *been wanting* to go to the United States, so this is a perfect opportunity.

INTERVIEWER Right. Have you (5) *had* / *been having* any experience of this sort of work?
MS DRAKE Not exactly, but I have three younger brothers, and I've (6) *looked* / *been looking* after them a lot in the past.

INTERVIEWER That sounds good. Now, have you (7) *chosen* / *been choosing* your main sport?
MS DRAKE To teach, you mean? Yes, I'm a good cyclist, but I think my best sport is swimming.

INTERVIEWER That's fine, Ms Drake. I think you've (8) *told* / *been telling* me everything ...

3 Complete the conversations with verbs from the box.

Use the present perfect or present perfect continuous and short forms.

call make play put read swim think

0 A Your hair's wet. B Yes, I *'ve been swimming* in the lake.

1 A What's wrong? You look very sad. B I about my pet rabbit.
It died yesterday.

2 A Have you heard from Sara? B No, I her twice today – there's no answer.

3 A Where's the car? B It's OK. I it in the garage.

4 A Why are the children so tired? B They with their cousins all day.

5 A Would you like to read this book? B Thanks, but I it before.

6 A Mmm, lovely smell! B Yes, Phil cakes all morning.