Unit 10

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

A

Study this example situation:



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.



Her 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. **Has painted** is a completed action. We are interested in 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.
- 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?
- Lisa 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:*

- How much of that book **have** you **read**?
- Lisa is writing emails. She**'s 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/like/believe**) are not normally used in the continuous:

- 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:

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

Present perfect simple → Units 7–8 Present perfect continuous → Unit 9
Present perfect + **for/since** → Units 11–12

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Exercises

10.1 **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 has been reading for two hours. (read)
He has read 53 pages so far. (read)

2 Rachel is from Australia. She is travelling round Europe at the moment. She began her trip three months ago.
She ..... for three months. (travel)
..... six countries so far. (visit)

3 Patrick is a tennis player. He began playing tennis when he was ten years old. This year he won the national championship again – for the fourth time.
..... the national championship four times. (win)
..... 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)
..... five films since they left college. (make)

10.2 **For each situation, ask a question using the words in brackets.**

1 You have a friend who is learning Arabic. You ask:
(how long / learn / Arabic?) How long have you been learning Arabic?
2 You have just arrived to meet a friend. She is waiting for you. You ask:
(wait / long?) Have .....
3 You see somebody fishing by the river. You ask:
(catch / any fish?) .....
4 Some friends of yours are having a party next week. You ask:
(how many people / invite?) .....
5 A friend of yours is a teacher. You ask:
(how long / teach?) .....
6 You meet somebody who is a writer. You ask:
(how many books / write?) .....
(how long / write / books?) .....
7 A friend of yours is saving money to go on a world trip. You ask:
(how long / save?) .....
(how much money / save?) .....

10.3 **Put the verb into the more suitable form, present perfect simple (I have done) or continuous (I have been doing).**

1 Where have you been? Have you been playing (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 'Liz is away on holiday.' 'Is she? Where ..... (she / go)?'
6 My brother is an actor. ..... (he / appear) in several films.
7 'Sorry I'm late.' 'That's all right. ..... (I / not / wait) long.'
8 'Is it still raining?' 'No, ... (it / stop).'
9 ..... (I / lose) my phone. ..... (you / see) it anywhere?
10 ..... (I / read) the book you lent me, but ..... (I / not / finish) it yet. It's very interesting.
11 ..... (I / read) the book you lent me, so you can have it back now.
12 This is a very old book. ..... (I / have) it since I was a child.

LIVEWORKSHEETS