Unit 12

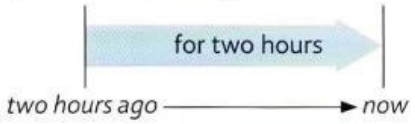
For and since When ... ? and How long ... ?

A

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**.

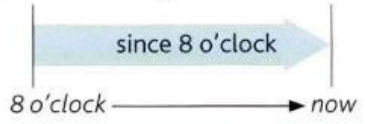


for		
two hours	20 minutes	five days
a long time	six months	50 years
a week	ages	years

- Sally has been working here **for six months**. (*not* since six months)
- I haven't seen Tom **for 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	Monday	12 May
April	2001	Christmas
lunchtime	we arrived	I got up

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

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)

You can use **in** instead of **for** in negative sentences (**I haven't** ... etc.):

- They **haven't had** a holiday **in ten years**. (= for ten years)

B

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**.

C

We say:

It's (= It **is**) *or* **It's been** (= It **has been**)	a long time / six months (etc.)	since something happened

- **It's two years since** I last saw Joe. *or* **It's been two years since** ... (= I haven't seen Joe for two years)
- **It's ages since** we went to the cinema. *or* **It's been ages since** ... (= We haven't been to the cinema for ages)
- **How long is it since** Mrs Hill died? *or* **How long has it been since** ... ? (= When did Mrs Hill die?)

How long have you (been) ... ? ➜ Unit 11

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Exercises

12.1 Write **for** or **since**.

1 It's been raining since lunchtime.
2 Sarah has lived in Paris ..... 1995.
3 Paul has lived in Brazil ..... ten years.
4 I'm tired of waiting. We've been sitting here ..... an hour.
5 Kevin has been looking for a job ..... he left school.
6 I haven't been to a party ..... ages.
7 I wonder where Joe is. I haven't seen him ..... last week.
8 Jane is away. She's been away ..... Friday.
9 The weather is dry. It hasn't rained ..... a few weeks.

12.2 Write questions with **how long** and **when**.

1 It's raining.
(how long?) How long has it been raining?
(when?) When did it start raining?
2 Kate is learning Japanese.
(how long / learn?) .....
(when / start?) .....
3 I know Simon.
(how long / you / know?) .....
(when / you / first / meet?) .....
4 Rebecca and David are married.
(how long?) .....
(when?) .....

12.3 Read the situations and complete the sentences.

1 It's raining. It's been raining since lunchtime. It started raining at lunchtime.
2 Ann and Jess are friends. They first met years ago. They've known each other for years.
3 Mark is ill. He became ill on Sunday. He has ..... Sunday.
4 Mark is ill. He became ill a few days ago. He has ..... a few days.
5 Sarah is married. She's been married for a year. She got ..... .
6 You have a headache. It started when you woke up.
I've ..... I woke up.
7 Sue has been in Italy for the last three weeks.
She went ..... .
8 You're working in a hotel. You started six months ago.
I've ..... .

12.4 Write B's sentences using the words in brackets.

1 A: Do you often go on holiday?
B: No, I haven't had a holiday for five years.
2 A: Do you often see Laura?
B: No, I ..... about a month.
3 A: Do you often go to the cinema?
B: No, ... a long time.
4 A: Do you often eat in restaurants?
B: No, ... ages.

Now write B's answers again. This time use **It's ... since ...** .

5 (1) No, it's five years since I had a holiday.
6 (2) No, its .....
7 (3) No, ...
8 (4) .....

LIVEWORKSHEETS