

how long have you (been) ... ?

A Study this example situation:



Dan and Kate are married. They got married exactly 20 years ago, so today is their 20th wedding anniversary.

They **have been** married **for 20 years**.

We say: They **are** married. (*present*)

but How long have they **been** married?
(not How long are they married?)

They **have been** married **for 20 years**.
(not They are married for 20 years)

(*present perfect*)

We use the *present perfect* to talk about something that began in the past and still continues now.

Compare the *present* and *present perfect*:

Paul **is** in hospital.
but He's **been** in hospital **since Monday**. (= He **has** been ...)
(not Paul is in hospital since Monday)

We **know** each other very well.
but We've **known** each other **for a long time**.
(not We know)

Do they **have** a car?
but How long have they **had** their car?

She's **waiting** for somebody.
but She **hasn't been waiting** **very long**.

present
he is
we know
do they have
she is waiting

present perfect
he has been
we have known
have they had
she has been waiting

past

now

B I've known / I've had / I've lived etc. is the *present perfect simple*.

I've been learning / I've been waiting etc. is the *present perfect continuous*.

When we ask or say 'how long', the continuous is more usual (see Unit 10):

- I've been learning English **since January**.
- It's been raining **all morning**.
- Richard **has been doing** the same job **for 20 years**.
- 'How long have you **been driving**?' 'Since I was 17.'

Some verbs (for example, **know** and **like**) are not normally used in the continuous:

- How long **have** you **known** Jane? (not have you been knowing)
- I've **had** these shoes for ages. (not I've been having)

See also Units 4A and 10C. For **have**, see Unit 17.

C You can use either the continuous or simple with **live** and **work**:

- Julia **has been living** in this house for a long time. or Julia **has lived** ...
- How long **have** you **been working** here? or How long **have** you **worked** here?

But we use the simple (**have lived** etc.) with **always**:

- I've **always lived** in the country. (not always been living)

D We say 'I **haven't** (done something) **since/for ...**' (*present perfect simple*):

- I **haven't seen** Tom since Monday. (= Monday was the last time I saw him)
- Sarah **hasn't phoned** for ages. (= the last time she phoned was ages ago)

11.1 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.

11.2 Read the situations and write questions using the words in brackets.

- 1 A friend tells you that Paul is in hospital. You ask him:
(how long / Paul / hospital?) How long has Paul been in hospital?
- 2 You know that Jane is a good friend of Katherine's. You ask Jane:
(how long / you / know / Katherine?)
- 3 Your friend's sister went to Australia some time ago and she's still there. You ask your friend:
(how long / sister / in Australia?)
- 4 You meet a woman who tells you that she teaches English. You ask her:
(how long / you / teach / English?)
- 5 Tom always wears the same jacket. It's very old. You ask him:
(how long / you / have / that jacket?)
- 6 You are talking to a friend about Joe, who now works at the airport. You ask your friend:
(how long / Joe / work / airport?)
- 7 You meet somebody on a plane. She says that she lives in Chicago. You ask her:
(you / always / live / in Chicago?)

11.3 Complete B's answers to A's questions.

A

- 1 Paul is in hospital, isn't he?
- 2 Do you see Lisa very often?
- 3 Is Paul married?
- 4 Is Amy married?
- 5 Do you still play tennis?
- 6 Are you waiting for the bus?
- 7 You know Mel, don't you?
- 8 Jack is never ill, is he?
- 9 Martin lives in Italy, doesn't he?
- 10 Sue lives in Berlin, doesn't she?
- 11 Is Joe watching TV?
- 12 Do you watch TV a lot?
- 13 Do you have a headache?
- 14 Do you go to the cinema a lot?
- 15 Would you like to go to New York one day?

B

Yes, he has been in hospital since Monday.
No, I haven't seen her for three months.
Yes, he has been married for ten years.
Yes, she has been married to a German guy.
No, I haven't played tennis for years.
Yes, I have been waiting for about 20 minutes.
Yes, we have been each other a long time.
No, he has been ill since I've known him.
Yes, he has been in Milan.
Yes, she has been in Berlin for many years.
Yes, he has been TV all evening.
No, I haven't watched TV since last weekend.
Yes, I have been a headache all morning.
No, I haven't gone to the cinema for ages.
Yes, I want to go to New York.
(use **always / want**)

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:

We've been waiting **for two hours**.



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

We've been waiting **since 8 o'clock**.



since		
8 o'clock	April	lunchtime
Monday	2001	we arrived
12 May	Christmas	I got up

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

B We often leave out **for** (but not usually in negative sentences):

They've been married **for ten years**. or They've been married **ten years**.
 They **haven't had** a holiday **for ten years**. (you need **for**)

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**)

We do **not** use **for + all ... (all day / all my life etc.)**:

I've lived here **all my life**. (not **for all my life**)

C 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 Kate first meet?
 B: They first met **a long time ago**.
 A: **How long** have they known each other?
 B: They've known each other **for a long time**.
since they were at school.

D We say:

it's or it's been	(= it is) (= it has been)	a long time six months (etc.)	since something happened
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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 she die?)

12.1 Write for or since.

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

12.2 Look at each answer and choose the right question.

- 1

How long have they been married?
When did they get married?

Ten years ago.
(When did they get married? is correct)
- 2

How long have you had this car?
When did you buy this car?

About five years.
- 3

How long have you been waiting?
When did you get here?

Only a few minutes.
- 4

How long have you been doing your course?
When did your course start?

September.
- 5

How long has Anna been in London?
When did Anna arrive in London?

Last week.
- 6

How long have you known each other?
When did you first meet each other?

A long time.

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 unwell. He became ill on Sunday. He has been ill since Sunday.
- 4 Sarah is married. She's been married for a year. She got married a year ago.
- 5 You have a headache. It started when you woke up.
I've been feeling unwell since I woke up.
- 6 Sue is in a meeting at work. It's been going on since 9 o'clock.
The meeting has been going on since 9 o'clock.
- 7 You're working in a hotel. You started working there six months ago.
I've been working here for six months.
- 8 Kate is learning Japanese. She's been doing this for a long time.
Kate started learning Japanese a long time ago.

12.4 Complete B's sentences.

A

- 1 Do you often go on holiday?
- 2 Have you seen Lisa recently?
- 3 Do you still go swimming regularly?
- 4 Do you still ride a bike these days?

B

No, I haven't had a holiday for five years.	about a month.
No, I	a long time.
No, I	ages.
No, I	

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

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

Present perfect continuous (I have been doing)

A It's been raining.

Study this example situation:



Is it raining?

No, but the ground is wet.

It's been raining (=It has been ...)**have/has been + -ing** is the *present perfect continuous*:

I/we/they/you he/she/it	have has	(= I've etc.) (= he's etc.)	been	doing working learning etc.
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We use the present perfect continuous for an activity that has recently stopped or just stopped:

- Why are you out of breath? **Have you been running?**
- Paul is very tired. **He's been working** hard.
- Why are you so tired? What **have you been doing**?
- I've been talking to Amanda and she agrees with me.
- Where have you been? I've been looking for you.

have/has been + -ing
present perfect continuous

now

B It's been raining for two hours.

Study this example situation:



It began raining two hours ago and it is still raining.

How long **has it been raining**?**It's been raining** for two hours. (=It has been ...)We use the present perfect continuous in this way, especially with **how long, for ...** and **since ...**. The activity is still happening (as in this example) or has just stopped.

- How long have you been learning** English? (=you're still learning English)
- Ben is watching TV. **He's been watching TV all day.**
- Where have you been? I've been looking for you **for the last half hour**.
- Chris **hasn't been feeling** well **recently**.

You can use the present perfect continuous for repeated actions:

- Silvia is a very good tennis player. **She's been playing since she was eight.**
- Every morning they meet in the same cafe. **They've been going there for years.**

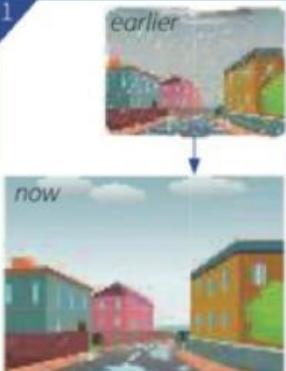
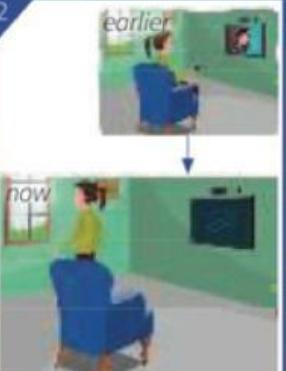
C Compare **I am doing** and **I have been doing**:

- Don't disturb me now. I'm **working**.
- We need an umbrella. It's **raining**.
- Hurry up! We're **waiting**.



- I've been **working** hard. Now I'm going to have a break.
- The ground is wet. It's **been raining**.
- We've been **waiting** for an hour.

9.1 What have these people been doing or what has been happening?

1 	2 	3 	4 
It's been raining.	She	They	He

9.2 Write a question for each situation.

- 1 You meet Kate as she is leaving the swimming pool. You say:
Hi, Kate. (you / swim?). **Have you been swimming?**
- 2 You have arrived a little late to meet Ben who is waiting for you. You say:
I'm sorry I'm late, Ben. (you / wait / long?).
- 3 Jane's little boy comes into the house with a very dirty face and dirty hands. His mother says:
Why are you so dirty? (what / you / do?).
- 4 You are in a shop and see Anna. You didn't know she worked there. You say:
Hi, Anna. (how long / you / work / here?).
- 5 A friend tells you about his job – he sells phones. You say:
You sell phones? (how long / you / do / that?).

9.3 Read the situations and complete the sentences.

- 1 It's raining. The rain started two hours ago.
It **'s been raining** for two hours.
- 2 We are waiting for the bus. We started waiting 20 minutes ago.
We **are waiting** for 20 minutes.
- 3 I'm learning Japanese. I started classes in December.
I **have been learning** Japanese since December.
- 4 Jessica is working in a hotel. She started working there on 18 January.
She **has been working** in the hotel since 18 January.
- 5 Our friends always go to Italy for their holidays. The first time was years ago.
They **have been going** to Italy for years.

9.4 Put the verb into the present continuous (am/is/are + -ing) or present perfect continuous (have/has been + -ing).

- 1 Maria **has been learning** (Maria / learn) English for two years.
- 2 Hi, Tom. **Are you looking** at me? I need to ask you something.
- 3 Why **are you looking** at me like that? Stop it!
- 4 Rachel is a teacher. **Has she taught** for ten years?
- 5 **Am I thinking** about what you said and I've decided to take your advice.
- 6 'Is Paul on holiday this week?' 'No, **isn't he working**?' (he / work).
- 7 Sarah is very tired. **Has she worked** very hard recently?
- 8 It's dangerous to use your phone when **you're driving**. (you / drive).
- 9 Laura **has been travelling** in South America for the last three months.

A Weather conditions

Notice that it is very common to form adjectives by adding **-y**.

noun	adjective	noun	adjective	verb
fog	foggy	sun	sunny	the sun is shining
cloud	cloudy	wind	windy	the wind is blowing
the cold	cold	snow	snowy	it's snowing
ice	icy	rain	wet	it's raining

There are common word partners to describe weather conditions:

It was very cloudy this morning, but the **sun came out** after lunch. [appeared]

The accident happened in **thick fog** [bad fog].

We had some **heavy rain** at the weekend. [a lot of rain; opp **light rain**]

There was a **strong wind** when we were on the boat. [a lot of wind]

The **wind** has **blown** all the apples off the tree.

It rained in the morning, but the **sky** was **clear** by lunchtime. [no clouds]

It's been **extremely cold** today. [very; also **extremely hot/windy**]

B Rain and storms

For heavy rain we often use the verb **pour**, e.g. **pour with rain**. For short periods of light or heavy rain, we use the noun **shower**. A **storm** is heavy rain with strong winds.

It **poured with rain** this afternoon.

Look, it's really **pouring (with rain)** now.

We had a couple of **heavy/light showers** this morning.

A period of hot weather sometimes ends with a **thunderstorm**.

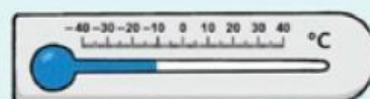
First it becomes very **humid** [the air feels very warm and wet], then you hear **thunder** and see **lightning**, and it's followed by heavy rain.



C Temperature*



40 degrees Celsius



10 degrees below zero

← **boiling** hot warm not very warm (also **cool**) cold (also **chilly**) **freezing** [very cold]

* how hot or cold it is

Language help

Cool can either mean slightly cold in a negative way, e.g. *We've had a cool summer*; or slightly cold in a pleasant way, e.g. *The water in the pool was lovely and cool*.

Mild is often used in a positive way to describe weather that is not as cold as usual, e.g. *It's been a mild winter*.

Exercises

7.1 Match the words on the left with the words on the right.

1 a sunny	<input type="checkbox"/> e	a with rain
2 heavy	<input type="checkbox"/>	b fog
3 a strong	<input type="checkbox"/>	c sky
4 a clear	<input type="checkbox"/>	d and lightning
5 pour	<input type="checkbox"/>	e day
6 thick	<input type="checkbox"/>	f rain
7 thunder	<input type="checkbox"/>	g wind

7.2 Write short sentences to describe the weather conditions in each picture.



1 It's foggy.

3

5



2

4

6

7.3 True or false? If a sentence is false, change it to make it true.

- 1 When it's foggy, you need sunglasses. *False. When it's foggy you can't see very well.*
- 2 It's nice to sit outside when it's freezing.
- 3 If you're boiling, you might enjoy a swim.
- 4 A shower is a type of wind.
- 5 If it's chilly, you may want to put on a coat.
- 6 If it's humid, the air will be very dry.
- 7 A mild winter means it is colder than usual.
- 8 If it rains, the road will be wet.

7.4 Complete the sentences.

- 1 We had really thick *fog* this morning.
- 2 I don't mind wet weather if it stays quite mild. I just hate the *rain*.
- 3 We had a heavy *rain* this morning, but it only lasted a few minutes.
- 4 It was *wet* with rain when we left the house.
- 5 It was minus ten *degrees* in New York yesterday. It is often below *zero* here in winter. It's *very* cold!
- 6 It's getting very humid. We might have a *shower* later.
- 7 It was cloudy and grey this morning, but when the sun *came out* it was quite hot.
- 8 What's the *temperature* today? It feels much colder than yesterday.
- 9 It was hot sitting in the sun, but under the beach umbrella it was nice and *cool*.

7.5

Over to you

Do you have these weather conditions in your country? When do you have them?

humid weather

storms and thunderstorms

strong winds

thick fog

temperatures below zero

showers