Present Perfect Continuous

Grammar Summary

1 Form

have/has + been + verb-ing	
✓ POSITIVE	× NEGATIVE
I/you/we/they **have been working** he/she/it **has been working**	I/you/we/they **haven't been working** he/she/it **hasn't been working**
? QUESTION	? HOW LONG
Have I/you/we/they **been working**? **Has** he/she/it **been working**?	**How long have** you **been working**?

2 When do we use it?

USE	EXAMPLE
Action still in progress	*She **has been studying** for three hours.* *(She is still studying now.)*
Repeated action up to now	*He **has been playing** football since he was six.*
Action just finished (with visible result)	*I **'ve been running.** That's why I'm out of breath.*

3 Time expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
for	a period of time	***for** two hours / **for** ages*
since	a point in time	***since** Monday / **since** 2018*
how long	question about duration	***How long** have you been waiting?*
recently / lately	'in the last few days/weeks'	*I **haven't been sleeping** well **lately**.*

4 Watch out!

We do NOT use present simple or present continuous here:

× *We wait here for twenty minutes.*

× *We're waiting here for twenty minutes.*

✓ *We**'ve been waiting** here for twenty minutes.*

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A

Put in the verbs. Use the Present Perfect Continuous.

Ilona: Sorry I'm late.
Emma: It's OK. (▶) I haven't been waiting ..... (I / not / wait) long.
What (1) ..... (you / do)?
Ilona: I've been with Mrs King. (2) ..... (she / help) me with my English.
Emma: Your English is very good. You don't need lessons, surely.
How long (3) ..... (you / study) English?
Ilona: Er, eight years now. But my accent wasn't so good before I came to England.
(4) ..... (I / try) to improve it.
I think (5) ..... (it / get) better lately.
Emma: Your accent is fine, Ilona. Honestly.

B

Say what these people have been doing. Use these verbs: *argue*, *cook*, *drive*, *wait*, *work*



▶ Andrew is tired because he's been working ..... all day.
1 Trevor and Laura are upset because .....
2 David is hot because .....
3 Mark feels very stiff because ..... all day.
4 Henry is annoyed. ..... a long time for Claire.

C

What could you say in these situations? Write sentences with the Present Perfect Continuous and a phrase with *for*. Use these verbs: *play*, *read*, *swim*, *talk*, *travel*, *work*

▶ A video is on. It began two hours ago, and it hasn't finished yet.
The video has been playing for two hours.

1 Matthew went into the water an hour ago. He doesn't want to come out yet.
.....

2 Your friends started their journey around the world three months ago. They've gone about halfway now.
.....

3 Mark got to the office early this morning. Ten hours later he's still there.
.....

4 Melanie rang Rita forty minutes ago, and they're still on the phone.
.....

5 Trevor has got an interesting book. He started it quite a long time ago. Ask him how long.
.....

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Embedded Questions

Grammar Reference

Embedded questions are questions hidden inside a sentence. In embedded questions, the word order is **statement word order** (subject + verb), NOT question word order.

They often begin with: ***I don't know …, I wonder …, Can you tell me …, I have no idea …, I'm not sure …, Do you know …***

Question	Where is the nearest pharmacy?
Embedded question	*I don't know where the nearest pharmacy is.*
Question	How long does the flight take?
Embedded question	*I have no idea how long the flight takes.*

⚠ **Remember!**

- **Direct question:** *What time does the museum close?*
- **Embedded question:** *Do you know what time the museum closes?*

Exercise 1

Choose the correct sentence in each pair.

1

a) I'm not sure how long the concert lasts.
b) I'm not sure how long lasts the concert.

2

a) Nobody knows when will the results arrive.
b) Nobody knows when the results will arrive.

3

a) Can you tell me where is the bus station?
b) Can you tell me where the bus station is?

4

a) I have no idea why she left the job.
b) I have no idea why did she leave the job.

Exercise 2

Match the embedded questions (1–5) to the direct questions (a–e).

Embedded questions

1 I wonder how much the repair will cost.
2 I'm not sure which platform the train leaves from.
3 Nobody knows whether the match has been cancelled.
4 Can you tell me how far it is to the city centre?
5 I have no idea why the manager resigned.

Direct questions

a) How far is it to the city centre?
b) Has the match been cancelled?
c) Why did the manager resign?
d) How much will the repair cost?
e) Which platform does the train leave from?

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Exercise 3

A friend is asking questions. You don't know the answers. Complete your replies using an embedded question.

1 *'What's the departure time?'* 'Sorry – I don't know what the departure time is.'
2 *'Where does the doctor work?'* 'Sorry – I don't know _____'
3 *'When did the film come out?'* 'Sorry – I don't know _____'
4 *'How much does a room cost?'* 'Sorry – I'm not sure _____'
5 *'Why is the road closed?'* 'Sorry – I have no idea _____'
6 *'Who won the competition?'* 'Sorry – I don't know _____'

Exercise 4

Join each pair of sentences to make one sentence using an embedded question. Use the phrase given.

1 What time does the pharmacy close? I don't know. *(I don't know …)*
I don't know what time the pharmacy closes.
2 How many people live in this city? I have no idea. *(I have no idea …)*
→ _____
3 Is the museum free on Sundays? Can you tell me? *(Can you tell me …)*
→ _____
4 Where did she study medicine? I wonder. *(I wonder …)*
→ _____
5 Did the flight land on time? I'm not sure. *(I'm not sure …)*
→ _____
6 Why is the office closed today? Nobody knows. *(Nobody knows …)*
→ _____

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1 Complete the sentences using the Present perfect continuous.

1 Thomas and Carol ..... (travel) together since the beginning of the year.
2 How long ..... (you / collect) stamps?
3 The builders ..... (work) day and night to finish the house.
4 I ..... (think) about getting a part-time job.
5 Amanda ..... (not / live) here for long.

2 Rewrite the sentences using the Present perfect continuous.

1 I started revising on Tuesday of last week and I haven't stopped yet.
I have .....
2 We first did English four years ago.
We .....
3 They bought that house in 2006. They still live there now.
They .....
4 She started collecting CDs when she was 12.
She .....
5 Tom bought a new bike on Saturday and he hasn't stopped riding it!
Tom .....

3 Tick the correct sentences.

1 a No one can tell me where can I get a cup of coffee. .....
b No one can tell me where I can get a cup of coffee. .....
2 a It's hard to understand why he did that. .....
b It's hard to understand why did he do that. .....
3 a No one knows where he went after the beach trip. .....
b No one knows where he did go after the beach trip. .....
4 a I have no idea how much does it cost to get in. .....
b I have no idea how much it costs to get in. .....
5 a We need to check what time the museum opens in the morning. .....
b We need to check what time does the museum open in the morning. .....

4 Rewrite the questions as embedded questions.

1 What are you doing?
I don't understand .....
2 What time does the film start?
No one seems to know .....
3 What time is it?
I have no idea .....
4 Why was she crying?
I wish I knew .....
5 Where is the nearest police station?
We need to find out .....

5 Circle the correct answer.

Dear Tina,
I'm sitting here revising for my exams. [1] *I'm studying / I've been studying* history all morning because that's my first exam. No one seems to know what [2] *we can / can we* expect in this exam, so everyone's nervous about it. It's the same with Geography – I have no idea what [3] *will the exam / the exam will contain.* Since the beginning of the year, we've been [4] *learned / learning* so many different things that I don't know where to start.

Only our English teacher has given us any idea about what we will be tested on. She said that, because [5] *we've / we'd* been learning tenses for the last two months, that's what we should revise. But it's difficult to guess [6] *what we / do we* have to do for the other subjects.

Write and tell me what you're up to.
Gill X

6 Write full answers about yourself.

1 How long have you been learning English?
.....
2 How long have you been living in your present house?
.....
3 How long have you been going to your school?
.....
4 How long have you been doing your favourite hobby?
.....
5 How long have you been wearing the kind of clothes you wear?
.....

LIVEWORKSHEETS