

9.9 The Present Perfect Continuous—An Overview

We use the present perfect continuous for a continuous action that started in the past and continues to the present.

EXAMPLES	EXPLANATION
I have been using the Internet since 9 A.M. I have been surfing the Web for 2 hours. We have been learning a lot about computers.	A continuous action started in the past and continues to the present.

Genealogy

Before You Read

1. Do you think it's important to know your family's history? Why or why not?
2. What would you like to know about your ancestors?



CD 3, TR 15

Read the following magazine article. Pay special attention to the present perfect and the present perfect continuous tenses.

In the last 30 years, genealogy **has become** one of America's most popular hobbies. If you type *genealogy* in a search engine, you can find about 90 million hits. If you type *family history*, you will get about 50 million hits. The percentage of the U.S. population interested in family history **has been increasing** steadily. This increase probably has to do with the ease of searching on the Internet.

The number of genealogy Web sites **has been growing** accordingly as people ask themselves: Where does my family come from? How long **has** my family **been** in the U.S.? Why did they come here? How did they come here? What kind of people were they?



Genealogy is a lifelong hobby for many. The average family historian has been doing genealogy for 14 years, according to a 2001 study. Most family historians are over 40. Cyndi Howells, from Washington State, quit her job in 1992 and has been working on her family history ever since. She has created a Web site called Cyndi's List to help others with their search. Her Web site has over 260,000 resources. Since its start in 1992, her Web site has had millions of visitors. Every day it gets about 15,000 visitors. Over the years, she has added many new links and deleted old ones.

Although the Internet has made research easier for amateur genealogists, it is only the beginning for serious family historians. Researchers still need to go to courthouses and libraries to find public records, such as land deeds,⁴ obituaries,⁵ wedding notices, and tax records. Another good source of information is the U.S. Census. Early census records are not complete, but since the mid-1800s, the U.S. Census has been keeping detailed records of family members, their ages, occupations, and places of birth.

Are you interested in knowing more about your ancestors and their stories, their country or countries, and how you fit into the history of your family? Maybe genealogy is a good hobby for you.

9.10 The Present Perfect Continuous—Forms

Subject	have/has	been	Present Participle	Complement
I	have	been	using	the Internet for two hours.
We	have	been	reading	about search engines.
You	have	been	studying	computers.
They	have	been	living	in California.
He	has	been	writing	since 1:00 P.M.
She	has	been	surfing	the Internet all day.
It	has	been	raining	all day.

Language Note: To form the negative, put *not* between *have* or *has* and *been*.

You **have not been** listening.

She **hasn't been** working hard.

⁴A *land deed* is a document that shows who the owner of the land is.

⁵Obituaries are death notices posted in the newspaper.

(continued)

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Compare affirmative statements and questions.

Wh-Word	have/ has	Subject	have/ has	been + Verb -ing	Complement	Short Answer
How long	Has has	Cyndi she she	has	been working been working been working	on her family history. on her Web site? on her Web site?	Yes, she has. Since 1992.

Compare negative statements and questions.

Wh-Word	haven't/ hasn't	Subject	haven't/ hasn't	been + Verb -ing	Complement
Why	haven't	They they	haven't	been using been using	the public library. the public library?

EXERCISE 15 Fill in the blanks with the present perfect continuous form of the verb in parentheses ().

EXAMPLE How long has Cyndi been managing a
(example: manage)
genealogy Web site?

1. Interest in genealogy _____.
(grow)
2. Cyndi _____ on her family history since 1992.
(work)
3. Cyndi _____ all over the U.S. to genealogy groups.
(lecture)
4. The number of genealogy Web sites _____.
(increase)
5. How long _____ the U.S. Census
_____ records?
(keep)
6. _____ you _____ on a family tree for
your family?
(work)
7. People _____ the Internet to do family research
(use)
since the 1990s.
8. My family _____ in the U.S. for many generations.
(not/live)