

# Intermediate grammar exercise: present perfect simple

English grammar practice exercise, intermediate level.

This exercise focuses on the difference between the **present perfect simple** and **present perfect continuous**.

## Instructions:

Complete the sentences below by putting the verb in brackets into the **present perfect simple** or **present perfect continuous**.

1 Paul, (you/be)  to Egypt?

2 How long (you/have)  that car, David?

3 I (know)  Jana for ten years. We're best friends.

4 Sorry I'm late, Peter. (you/wait)  long?

5 How long (you/play)  the guitar? - Five years.

6 She's in the kitchen preparing the food for the party. So far she (make)  about 20 sandwiches.

7 I (like)  football ever since I first watched Liverpool play when I was eight years old.

8 Our neighbours (make)  a noise all day.

9 The price of petrol (go down)  by about 1%.

10 The price of petrol (go down)  since last April.

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### Structure of present perfect simple

| positive  | Negative   | question  |
|---|--|---|
| I / you / we / they<br><b>have gone.</b>        | I / you / we / they<br><b>haven't gone.</b>        | <b>Have</b><br>I / you / we / they<br><b>gone?</b>  |
| he / she / it<br><b>has gone.</b>               | he / she / it<br><b>hasn't gone.</b>               | <b>Has</b><br>he / she / it<br><b>gone?</b>   |
| positive  | Negative   | question  |
| I / you / we / they<br><b>have been working</b> | I / you / we / they<br><b>haven't been working</b> | <b>Have</b><br>I / you / we / they<br><b>been working?</b>  |
| he / she / it<br><b>has been working</b>        | he / she / it<br><b>hasn't been working</b>        | <b>Has</b><br>he / she / it<br><b>been working?</b>   |
| Common mistakes                                 | Correct version                                    | Why?  |
| I worked every day this week.                   | I <b>have worked</b> every day this week.          | We use the present perfect ( <i>have worked</i> ) when we speak about an unfinished time period ( <i>this week, this year, etc</i> ).                                       |
| Steven has wrote a new book.                    | Steven has <b>written</b> a new book.              | We use the past participle of the verb – <i>written</i> is the past participle, <i>wrote</i> is the past simple.  |
| Did you have seen him before?                   | <b>Have you seen</b> him before?                   | The helping verb <i>have</i> is used in the present perfect and it is inverted with the person ( <i>you have</i> becomes <i>have you</i> ).                                 |
| I didn't have seen him before.                  | I <b>haven't seen</b> him before.                  | The helping verb <i>have</i> is used in the present perfect – to make it negative we simply add <i>not (n't)</i> .  |
| I am here since last week.                      | I <b>have been</b> here since last week.           | The present perfect is used to show an action which continues to the present (an unfinished action).  |
| I've been knowing him for 5 years.              | I've <b>known</b> him for 5 years.                 | Verbs such as <i>know, want, like, etc.</i> (called <u>stative verbs</u> ) suggest permanent states, not actions, so are used in the simple form, NOT the <i>-ing</i> form. |

| Common mistakes   | Correct version                                | Why?  |
|---|--|---|
| It has been rain heavily all day.   | It has <b>been raining</b> heavily all day.    | The structure of the present perfect continuous is <b>have/has + been + verb + -ing</b> .   |
| I have sat here for two hours.  | I have <b>been sitting</b> here for two hours. | Verbs such as <i>sit</i> , <i>wait</i> , <i>speak</i> , etc. ('non-stative' verbs) suggest continuity and so are mostly used in the continuous (-ing) form. |
| <b>Which?</b>   |  |   |
| <i>I have worked here for five years.</i>   |  |   |
| <i>I have been working here for five years.</i>   |  |   |
| When BOTH the simple and continuous forms are possible, native speakers prefer to use the continuous. |  |   |