

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

I / you / we / they
have gone.

he / she / it
has gone.

Negative

I / you / we / they
haven't gone.

he / she / it
hasn't gone.

question

Have

I / you / we / they
gone?

Has

he / she / it
gone?

positive

I / you / we / they
have been working

he / she / it
has been working

Negative

I / you / we / they
haven't been working

he / she / it
hasn't been working

question

Have

I / you / we / they
been working?

Has

he / she / it
been working?

Common mistakes

I worked every day this week.

Steven has wrote a new book.

Did you have seen him before?

I didn't have seen him before.

I am here since last week.

I've been knowing him for 5 years.

Correct version

I have worked every day this week.

Steven has **written** a new book.

Have you seen him before?

I haven't seen him before.

I have been here since last week.

I've known him for 5 years.

Why?

We use the present perfect (*have worked*) when we speak about an unfinished time period (*this week, this year, etc*).

We use the past participle of the verb – *written* is the past participle, *wrote* is the past simple.

The helping verb *have* is used in the present perfect and it is inverted with the person (*you have* becomes *have you*).

The helping verb *have* is used in the present perfect – to make it negative we simply add *not* (*n't*).

The present perfect is used to show an action which continues to the present (an unfinished action).

Verbs such as *know, want, like, etc.* (called [stative verbs](#)) suggest permanent states, not actions, so are used in the simple form, NOT the *-ing* form.

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