

53 Present perfect with *for*, *since*, etc.



1 *for/since*

We use the present perfect with *for* or *since* to talk about situations that started in the past and continue now:

5 YEARS AGO (John left school and started work here.)	NOW (John still works here.)
→ John has worked here <i>for</i> five years.	→
→ John has worked here <i>since</i> he left school.	→

For and *since* both answer the question *How long?*
'*How long have you worked here?*' 'For five years.'
'*How long have you known Sami?*' 'Since 2000.'

Use <i>for</i> + a period of time	five minutes, an hour, two weeks, for years, a long time, etc.	Sami's been my best friend <i>for</i> many years.
Use <i>since</i> + an exact time, day, date or event	five o'clock, Monday, March, he left school	Sami's been my best friend <i>since</i> 2000. Sami's been my best friend <i>since</i> we started school.

⚠ *X I know Alan for thirty years.* ✓ *I've known Alan for thirty years.*

2 *this morning, this week, etc.*

We use the present perfect with time expressions (e.g. *today*, *this morning*, *this week*, *this year*) when the time is still continuing:

Have you seen Jan this morning? (It is still morning.)

I've worked forty hours this week. (The week has not finished.)

Compare the present perfect and past simple

- present perfect:

I've made several phone calls this morning. (It is still morning.)

- past simple:

I made several phone calls this morning.

(It is now afternoon/evening – the morning has finished.)

⚠ After *when* or *what time* in questions, we use the past simple not the present perfect:

X When have you bought your car? ✓ *When did you buy your car?*

X What time have you arrived? ✓ *What time did you arrive?*

Practice

1 Write *for* or *since* below.

0	..... <i>for</i> about 200 years	4	..... one year
00	..... <i>since</i> 1810	5	..... July
1	..... 1987	6	..... I was eighteen
2	..... ten minutes	7	..... nearly three months
3	..... quarter past three	8	..... about twenty-five years

2 Complete each sentence in two ways. Use the phrases from Exercise 1.

- 0 They built that school a long time ago.
It's been there *for* *about 200 years* / *since 1810*
- 1 It's 3.25 and I've been at the dentist's /
- 2 My parents have been married /
- 3 I'm nineteen. I started college when I was eighteen.
I've been at college /
- 4 It's October and the weather has been lovely /

3 Match the two parts of the sentences.

- 0 I haven't heard from my sister this
- 1 This film's so long! It's already lasted for
- 2 We haven't felt very well since
- 3 I haven't seen my parents for
- 4 I'm really sorry but I've been very busy this
- 5 I've felt more relaxed since

- A we had that meal at the airport.
- B my holiday – two weeks by the beach!
- C two hours and there's still another hour to go.
- D morning and I haven't finished the report.
- E week, but she usually phones on Fridays.
- F two months because they live abroad now.

4 GRAMMAR IN USE For 1–6, write the present perfect or the past simple of the verbs in brackets (). For A–D, write *for*, *since* or *How long*.

DOCTOR (0) ... *How long* ... have you had this cold?

PATIENT Well, I (00) ... *'ve had* ... (have) it for nearly two weeks, but I've had a cough for longer.

DOCTOR How long have you had that?

PATIENT I've had it (A) October, so more than a month. The thing is, I (1) (have) about five colds (B) the spring.

DOCTOR That is a lot. (2) (you / have) a lot of colds last year, too?

PATIENT No, not really. I think I (3) (have) only two all last year.

DOCTOR Mmm, (4) (you / change) anything about your life this year?

PATIENT Well, yes, my job. I work in a gym now. I'm a fitness trainer.

DOCTOR I see. (C) have you worked there?

PATIENT I (5) (start) the job in March, so I've been there (D) eight months. We've had a few customers with colds I suppose ...

DOCTOR I see. And what was your job before?

PATIENT I was a gardener. I worked by myself.

DOCTOR Well, that's it. You (6) (spend) a lot of time close to people with colds, and you've caught their colds. Now, I think you should ...