

How long have you (been) ... ?

A Study this example situation:



Dan and Jenny are married. They got married exactly 20 years ago, so today is their 20th wedding anniversary.

They **have been** married **for 20 years**.

We say: They **are** married. (*present*)

but **How long have they been** married? (*present perfect*)
(not How long are they married?)

They **have been** married **for 20 years**.
(not They are married for 20 years)

We use the *present perfect* to talk about something that began in the past and still continues now. Compare the *present* and the *present perfect*:

- ☐ Paul is in hospital.
- but He's **been** in hospital **since Monday**. (= He **has** been ...)
(not Paul is in hospital since Monday)
- ☐ Do you **know** each other well?
- but **Have** you **known** each other **for a long time**?
(not Do you know)
- ☐ She's **waiting** for somebody.
- but She's **been waiting** all morning.
- ☐ Do they **have** a car?
- but **How long have** they **had** their car?

present
he is
do you know
she is waiting

present perfect
he has been
have you known
she has been waiting

past now

B I have known/had/lived etc. is the *present perfect simple*.

I have been learning / been waiting / been doing etc. is the *present perfect continuous*.

When we ask or say 'how long', the continuous is more usual (see Unit 10):

- ☐ I've **been learning** English **for six months**.
- ☐ It's **been raining** **since lunchtime**.
- ☐ Richard **has been doing** the same job **for 20 years**.
- ☐ 'How long have you **been driving**?' 'Since I was 17.'

Some verbs (for example, **know/like/believe**) are not normally used in the continuous:

- ☐ How long **have** you **known** Jane? (not have you been knowing)
- ☐ I've **had** a pain in my stomach all day. (not I've been having)

See also Units 4A and 10C. For **have**, see Unit 17.

C You can use either the present perfect continuous or simple with **live** and **work**:

- ☐ Julia **has been living** / **has lived** here for a long time.
- ☐ How long **have** you **been working** / **have** you **worked** here?

But use the simple (I've lived / I've done etc.) with **always**:

- ☐ I've **always lived** in the country. (not always been living)

D We say 'I haven't done something **since/for** ...' (*present perfect simple*):

- ☐ I **haven't seen** Tom **since Monday**. (= Monday was the last time I saw him)
- ☐ Sarah **hasn't phoned** for ages. (= the last time she phoned was ages ago)

11.1 Are the underlined verbs right or wrong? Correct them where necessary.

- 1 Ben is a friend of mine. I know him very well. OK
- 2 Ben is a friend of mine. I know him for a long time. I've known him
- 3 Sarah and Adam are married since July.
- 4 The weather is awful. It's raining again.
- 5 The weather is awful. It's raining all day.
- 6 I like your house. How long are you living there?
- 7 Gary is working in a shop for the last few months.
- 8 I don't know Tom well. We've only met a few times.
- 9 I gave up drinking coffee. I don't drink it for a year.
- 10 That's a very old bike. How long do you have it?

11.2 Read the situations and write questions from the words in brackets.

- 1 A friend tells you that Paul is in hospital. You ask him:
(how long / be / in hospital?) How long has Paul been in hospital?
- 2 You meet a woman who tells you that she teaches English. You ask her:
(how long / teach / English?) How long have you been teaching English?
- 3 You know that Jane is a good friend of Katherine's. You ask Jane:
(how long / know / Katherine?) How long have you known Katherine?
- 4 Your friend's brother went to Australia some time ago and he's still there. You ask your friend:
(how long / be / in Australia?) How long has he been in Australia?
- 5 Tom always wears the same jacket. It's a very old jacket. You ask him:
(how long / have / that jacket?) How long have you had that jacket?
- 6 You are talking to a friend about Joe. Joe now works at the airport. You ask your friend:
(how long / work / at the airport?) How long has Joe been working at the airport?
- 7 A friend of yours is having guitar lessons. You ask him:
(how long / have / guitar lessons?) How long have you been having guitar lessons?
- 8 You meet somebody on a plane. She says that she lives in Chicago. You ask her:
(always / live / in Chicago?) How long has she lived in Chicago?

11.3 Complete B's answers to A's questions.

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| <p>A</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Paul is in hospital, isn't he? 2 Do you see Ann very often? 3 Is Amy married? 4 Are you waiting for me? 5 You know Mel, don't you? 6 Do you still play tennis? 7 Is Joe watching TV? 8 Do you watch TV a lot? 9 Do you have a headache? 10 Adrian is never ill, is he? 11 Are you feeling ill? 12 Sue lives in Berlin, doesn't she? 13 Do you go to the cinema a lot? 14 Would you like to go to New York one day? | <p>B</p> <p>Yes, he <u>has been</u> in hospital since Monday.</p> <p>No, I <u>haven't seen</u> her for three months.</p> <p>Yes, she <u>has been</u> married for ten years.</p> <p>Yes, I <u>have been waiting</u> for the last half hour.</p> <p>Yes, we <u>have been seeing</u> each other a long time.</p> <p>No, I <u>haven't played</u> tennis for years.</p> <p>Yes, he <u>has been watching</u> TV all evening.</p> <p>No, I <u>haven't watched</u> TV for ages.</p> <p>Yes, I <u>have had</u> a headache all morning.</p> <p>No, he <u>hasn't been ill</u> since I've known him.</p> <p>Yes, I <u>have been feeling</u> ill all day.</p> <p>Yes, she <u>has been living</u> in Berlin for the last few years.</p> <p>No, I <u>haven't gone</u> to the cinema for ages.</p> <p>Yes, I <u>would like to go</u> to New York.
(use always / want)</p> |
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