

Explanations

Present perfect: form

- The present perfect is formed with the present tense of the auxiliary verb *have* and the past participle (third column in verb tables). The past participles of irregular verbs are listed on page 277.

*I **have decided** to leave tomorrow.* (regular)

*She **has written** the email to Lucy.* (irregular)

In speech and informal writing these forms are contracted to:

I've decided. She's written.

- Questions and negatives

Questions are formed by inverting the subject and *have*. Negatives are formed with *not* and contractions are used.

***Have you decided** yet?*

*She **has not written** the email. She **hasn't written** the email.*

Present perfect: meaning

The present perfect describes past events which are connected to the present. There are a number of different uses:

- Experiences in our life up to now.

***Have you visited** any other countries?*

*Yes, I've **been** to Italy and France.*

There is no time expression because we are talking about a whole life experience, not individual events. If we wanted to say when the events happened we would use the past simple.

- An event in the past that has a result in the present.

*Helen **has broken** her pencil.*

*I've **hurt** my foot.*

There is no time expression because when it happened is not important. Our attention is on the present (Where is the pencil sharpener? / I can't play football). If we wanted to say when the actions happened we would use the past simple.

- A situation that started in the past and continues until the present.

*I've **lived here** for ten years.*

*I've **often seen** Jim with his dog in the park.*

Here there is a time expression, describing how long or how often something has happened.

Time expressions

■ Completion

We often use the present perfect when we describe how many things are completed so far.

I've read a hundred pages of this book.

An exact time is not mentioned.

■ *ever, never*

We use *ever* and *never* when we ask or talk about our experiences in life.

Have you ever eaten Japanese food?

No, I've never eaten it.

■ *yet, so far* and *already*

We use *yet* in questions and negative sentences. It has a similar meaning to *so far* (or 'up to now'), which is used in questions and positive sentences.

Have you finished this book yet? No, I'm on page 56.

How many pages have you read? I've read 56 pages so far.

We use *already* in positive sentences to describe an action which happened before.

When are you going to finish your letter?

I've already written it.

■ *just*

We use *just* when we describe a very recent event.

Cathy has just phoned from the airport.

■ Frequency adverbs: *always, often* etc.

Frequency adverbs that are used with the present simple can also be used with the present perfect.

He has always loved you. (a state)

We have often visited Spain. (a repeated event)

■ *for* and *since*

for describes the length of a time period.

Tom has worked here for three months.

since describes the point when the time period started.

Tom has worked here since July 10th.

→ SEE ALSO

Grammar 3: Present time 2

Practice

1 Put each verb into a form of the present perfect simple.

- a) What's the matter? (you cut) *Have you cut* yourself?
- b) I (have) a headache ever since lunchtime.
- c) Nadia (never see) any Chinese films.
- d) Someone (steal) Mr Grant's bike.
- e) The passengers are tired because they (not sleep) all night.
- f) I'm afraid we (just break) your window. Sorry!
- g) David (not win) a prize this time, I'm afraid.
- h) (you ever eat) Spanish food? It's great!

2 Complete what each speaker says.



We *'ve been married* for twenty-five wonderful years!



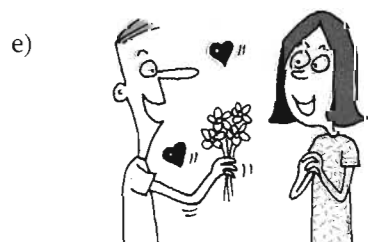
I on holiday to Australia.



I twenty-three letters!



I a snail before!



I you since the day we met!



Oh no! I my pencil!

3 Complete each sentence with a time word or phrase from the box.

yet for ~~since~~ often ever never already so far just always

- a) Luis has lived in the city centre *since* 1996.
 b) Thanks for the present! I've wanted a pet goldfish!
 c) Have you drunk pineapple juice? It's fantastic!
 d) I've heard some fantastic news! I've passed my exams!
 e) Hurry up! Haven't you finished ? You're so slow!
 f) Nina has worked in this company five years.
 g) I've been on a big ship before. It's an interesting experience!
 h) We're very busy today. we've sold over a hundred bikes.
 i) I've passed this building, but this is the first time I've been inside.
 j) Can I have a different book? I've read this one.

4 For each question, complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first, using no more than three words.

- a) We started working here three years ago.
 We *'ve worked here* for three years.
 b) This is the first time I've been on a plane.
 I on a plane before.
 c) That's strange! My pen isn't here!
 That's strange! disappeared!
 d) Nicky and Jan aren't at this school any more.
 Nicky and Jan this school.
 e) I saw a friend of yours a few moments ago.
 I a friend of yours.
 f) I'm still writing my letters.
 I writing my letters yet.
 g) Is this your first visit to South America?
 Have to South America before?
 h) Oh no! My wallet is still in the car.
 Oh no! I my wallet in the car.
 i) It's a long time since we spoke to your sister.
 We to your sister for a long time.
 j) Is Anna still asleep?
 Has up yet?



Present perfect 2

Explanations

Present perfect continuous: form

The present perfect continuous is formed with the present perfect of *be*, and the *-ing* form of the verb.

I've been waiting here all morning.

What have you been doing lately?

I haven't been sleeping well recently.

Present perfect continuous: meaning

- The present perfect continuous, like the present perfect, describes past events which are connected to the present. But in the continuous form there is a meaning of an action or situation in progress.

What have you been doing lately?

I've been working a lot.

How long have you been living here?

- The present perfect continuous can emphasize the length of time of the action.

I've been waiting here all morning.

I've been feeling ill for weeks.

- The present perfect continuous can emphasize that the action is temporary.

I've been staying in a hotel for the past month.

- The present perfect continuous can be used for repeated actions.

I've been phoning her for days, but she's never at home.

- The action may be finished or continuing, we only know by the situation.

Carlos has been studying English for two years and now he's stopped! What a shame.

Carlos has been studying English for two years. He's going to do an exam next year.

Time expressions

Typical time expressions that are used with the present perfect continuous include:

all day, all morning, for days, for ages, lately, recently, since, for

Present perfect or present perfect continuous?

- Often there is very little difference between the two tenses:
I've worked/been working here for two years.
I've lived/been living here for two years.
- We often use the present perfect if our attention is on the finished result, but the present perfect continuous if our attention is on the action.
I've written that email to Jackie. I was meaning to do it for ages.
I've been writing that email to Jackie and it's taken an hour! I'm exhausted!
- If we give details of how many or how much we do not use a continuous form.
I've written four emails.
I've done a lot of cooking and cleaning this afternoon.

Other problems

- Present simple or present perfect?
 We use the present simple to describe habits or states in the present, but we use the present perfect to describe the time until the present.
I live in Prague.
 (a permanent state – I always live there)
I've lived in Prague for two years.
 (I arrived two years ago and still live there)

- Past simple or present perfect?
 The past simple describes an event in a completed time period. The present perfect is used for a time period that includes the present.
I lived in Prague in the nineties. (now I live somewhere else)
I've lived in Prague since the nineties. (I still live there)

The choice of tense often depends on whether our attention is in the past or the present.

I had an umbrella, but I left it on the bus.
 (the event is distant in my mind)
Oh no! I've left my umbrella on the bus.
 (the event is present in my mind)

- *have been* and *have gone*
 If we *have been* to a place, we went there and have now returned. If we *have gone* to a place, we went there but have not returned.
Melissa has been to China. (and she has come back)
Melissa has gone to China. (and she is still there)

→ SEE ALSO

Grammar 4: Past time 1

Practice

1 Underline the correct word or phrase in each sentence.

- a) I live here/I've lived here since the end of last year.
- b) I'm afraid the last train left/has left an hour ago.
- c) Someone has just stolen/has just been stealing my bicycle.
- d) Thank you for your offer, but I decided/I've decided not to accept.
- e) Yesterday I lost/I've lost my wallet.
- f) Take your umbrella with you. It started/It's started raining.
- g) We're enjoying our trip. We visited/We've visited two countries so far.
- h) I'm standing here/I've been standing here for hours and I feel tired.
- i) This was/has been a busy day and it isn't over yet!
- j) I feel really tired. We went/We've been to a party last night.

2 Put each verb in brackets into either the present perfect, past simple or present simple.

- a) Last week I (lose) lost my scarf, and now I (just lose)
..... 've just lost my gloves.
- b) I (work) for Blue Bank at the moment but I (decide) to change jobs.
- c) We (be) here for hours. Are you sure we (come) to the right place?
- d) (you see) my calculator? I'm sure I (leave) it here earlier.
- e) We (have) some coffee and then (catch) the bus home.
- f) I (never eat) octopus, but once on holiday I (eat) some squid.
- g) I (hope) you aren't a vegetarian. I (cook) you some lamb chops.
- h) Recently a lot of young people (take up) kite surfing.
- i) When we (reach) the cinema, there (not be) any tickets left.
- j) Please come quickly! Nick (have) an accident, and he (go) to hospital.

3 Complete each mini-dialogue by putting the verbs given in brackets into either the present perfect or present perfect continuous.

- a) A: Terminator 2 is on at the Rex? (you see) *Have you seen* it?
 B: No, not yet. Shall we go? I (look forward) *'ve been looking forward*
 to seeing it for ages.
- b) A: What's the matter? You look really tired!
 B: I am! I (study) all day, and I (not finish)
 yet.
 A: Oh well, time for a break.
- c) A: I (phone) Carol all day, but there's no reply.
 B: I expect she (go) swimming with her friends.
- d) A: (you hear) the news?
 B: What news?
 A: Someone (rob) the bank at the end of the road.
- e) A: Why is your leg in plaster?
 B: That's a silly question! I (break) it, of course.
 A: Someone (write) 'Break Time' on the plaster!

4 For each question, complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first, using no more than three words.

- a) I came to live here three months ago.
 I *'ve been living* here for three months.
- b) Sophie is out at the shops at the moment.
 Sophie to the shops.
- c) I've had French lessons since March.
 I French since March.
- d) I'm still reading this book.
 I reading this book yet.
- e) Paul left the room a moment ago.
 Paul has the room.
- f) It's ages since I last went to the cinema.
 I to the cinema for ages.
- g) This is the first time I've eaten snails.
 I snails before.
- h) I don't remember Helen's phone number.
 I've Helen's phone number.