

## Explanations

### Recent events

Present perfect simple

The present perfect simple is used to describe recent events.

*I've left my shopping bag behind.*

The event happened in the past, but there is a result in the present.

*I've broken my arm, as you can see.*

No definite time is given for the event, but to emphasise the idea of recentness we can use *just*.

*I've just broken my watch.*

We can also describe events that have not happened.

*I haven't found her phone number yet.*

### Indefinite events

■ Present perfect simple

No definite time is given for the events. They are a series of actions in our life up to now.

*I've been to France three times.*

After *It's/This is the first/second time* we use the present perfect. It also refers to our life up to now.

*This is the first time I have eaten Japanese food.*

■ Compared with past simple

Events described using the past simple have definite times.

*I went to France last year.*

*I ate at a Japanese restaurant on Saturday.*

If we think of a definite place for an event, this may suggest a definite time.

*I left my shopping bag on the train.*

### Extended or repeated events

■ Present perfect simple

The present perfect simple describes a state which lasts up to the present.

*I've lived in this house for five years.*

The present perfect simple can describe a habitual action in a period of time up to the present.

*I've never worn a tie to work, and I refuse to start now!*

■ Present perfect continuous

The present perfect continuous can also describe a state which lasts up to the present moment.

*I've been living in this house for five years.*

There is little difference in meaning between simple and continuous in this case, or with *How long* questions.

*How long have you lived/been living in this house?*

The verbs *wait, sit, lie, stay* prefer the present perfect continuous.

*I've been waiting for ages.*

## FIRST CERTIFICATE LANGUAGE PRACTICE

*For, since, ago*

See Grammar 14 for contrast between these time expressions.

Present perfect  
simple or  
continuous?

■ Completed action

The present perfect simple can show that an action is complete.

*I've finished my homework!*

If we say *how many* or *how much* we use the simple form. A certain amount has been completed.

*I've written ten pages of my homework!*

■ Not completed

The present perfect continuous can show that an action is not completed, that it has finished recently.

*We've been walking for hours! Let's have a rest.*

*I've been digging the garden. That's why I'm so dirty!*

■ Present result or action in progress

We use the present perfect simple if our attention is on the present result.

*I've written my homework. Now I can watch the television.*

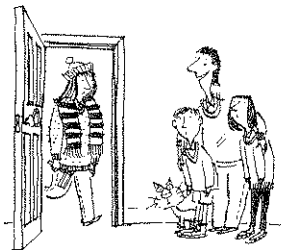
We use the present perfect continuous if our attention is on the action in progress.

*I've been writing my homework all evening! I didn't know it would take so long.*

# Practice

1 Choose a suitable description for each picture.

a)



- ① Did you enjoy the match?  
2) Have you enjoyed the match?

b)



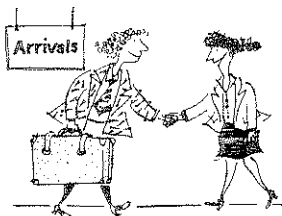
- 1) What have you been doing?  
2) What have you done?

c)



- 1) He was married six times.  
2) He has been married six times.

d)



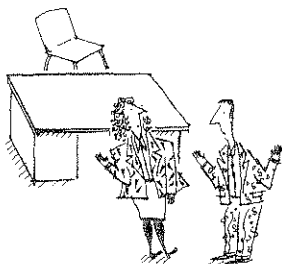
- 1) How long have you been here?  
2) How long are you here for?

e)



- 1) I've been waiting for two hours.  
2) I waited for two hours.

f)



- 1) Where did Wendy go?  
2) Where has Wendy been?

**2 Underline the most suitable verb form in each sentence.**

- a) *Did you see/Have you seen* my bag anywhere? I can't find it.
- b) Larry *is writing/has been writing/has written* his novel for the last two years.
- c) From the minute he got up this morning Gary *asked/has asked/has been asking* silly questions!
- d) *Have you given/Did you give* Helen my message when you *have seen/saw* her?
- e) Sorry, could you say that again? I *didn't listen/haven't listened/haven't been listening* to you.
- f) The police think that they *found/have found* your wallet, so call this number.
- g) *Did you two meet/Have you two met* before? Eric, this is Amanda.
- h) *Did you meet/Have you met* anyone interesting at the reception?

**3 Put each verb in brackets into a suitable verb form.**

- a) I'm sorry about not coming last week. I (have) ..... *had* ..... a cold and so I (stay) ..... at home.
- b) Wait a minute! I (have) ..... an idea. Let's go and see Roger. We last (see) ..... him a long time ago.
- c) It's nice to be back here in London. This is the second time I (come) ..... here.
- d) I'm phoning about your bicycle for sale, which I (see) ..... in the local paper. (you sell) ..... it? Or is it still available?
- e) This place is in a terrible mess! What on earth (you do) ..... ?
- f) And now for an item of local news. Hampshire police (find) ..... the dangerous snake which (go) ..... missing earlier in the week.
- g) This tooth (kill) ..... me lately! So I (make) ..... an appointment with the dentist for next Tuesday.
- h) I can't give you the report I (promise) ..... for today because I (not finish) ..... it.

**4 Underline the most suitable time expression.**

- a) I haven't seen Gerry *for/since* a long time. How is he?
- b) It's ages *ago/since* I last went to a football match.
- c) I've written to Deborah *last week/recently*.
- d) What have you been doing *today/yesterday*?
- e) Have you eaten Italian food *before/already*?
- f) I've been living here *in/since* the end of last year.
- g) Actually I had dinner with Sue *last night/lately*.
- h) I've been trying to get in touch with David *for ages/for the last time*.
- i) Terry hasn't been to Edinburgh *since/when* we went there together.
- j) I can't remember *how long/when* I've had this watch.

**5** Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between two and five words, including the word given.

a) Steve started learning the violin a month ago.

**learning**

Steve ..... *has been learning* ..... the violin for a month.

b) I haven't been to an Indian restaurant for ages.

**since**

It's ages ..... an Indian restaurant.

c) When she heard the results, Mary began to feel more confident.

**become**

Since hearing the results ..... more confident.

d) The last time Nancy came here was in 1986.

**since**

Nancy hasn't ..... 1986.

e) This is my first visit to Japan.

**time**

This is the first ..... to Japan.

f) How long have Helen and Robert been married?

**get**

When ..... married?

g) Jack bought those trousers last month, and has been wearing them ever since.

**for**

Jack has ..... a month.

h) It's a long time since our last conversation.

**spoken**

We ..... long time.

i) Thanks, but I had something to eat earlier.

**already**

Thanks, but I've ..... eat.

j) This is my first game of water-polo.

**played**

I ..... before.

**6 Put each verb in brackets into either the present perfect simple or the present perfect continuous.**

- a) Someone (eat) ..... *has eaten* ..... all the cakes. I'll have to buy some more.
- b) What (you buy) ..... your sister for her birthday?
- c) My throat is really sore. I (sing) ..... all evening.
- d) Brenda (learn) ..... Russian, but she finds it difficult.
- e) How many people (you invite) ..... to your party?
- f) Those two cats (sit) ..... on that branch for the last hour.
- g) It (rain) ..... all day! Why can't it stop?
- h) Diana (wear) ..... twelve different dresses in the past week!
- i) I (do) ..... everything you asked. What should I do now?
- j) Graham and Pauline (try) ..... to find a house for ages, but they can't find one they can afford.

**7 Put each verb in brackets into either the past simple, the present perfect simple, or the present perfect continuous.**

It was announced in London this morning that the British Oil Corporation (1) *has discovered* ..... (discover) oil under the sea near the Welsh coast. The company, which (2) ..... (drill) for oil in the area since 2001, (3) ..... (find) small amounts of oil near Swansea last month, and since then (4) ..... (discover) larger amounts under the seabed nearby. Last year the government (5) ..... (lend) over £50,000,000 to BOC, and (6) ..... (give) permission for the company to build an oil refinery and other facilities in South Wales.

The reaction of local people to today's news (7) ..... (be) mixed so far. Local MPs (8) ..... (already welcome) the news, pointing out that the oil industry will bring badly needed jobs to the area. But local residents are worried about the danger of pollution. 'Nobody (9) ..... (ask) us yet what we want,' said Ann Griffiths, leader of the Keep Out The Oil Campaign. 'Look what (10) ..... (happen) when they (11) ..... (find) oil in Scotland in the 1960s. The oil companies (12) ..... (get) rich, not the local people. BOC (13) ..... (not tell) us the truth about what this is going to mean for our people.' A BOC spokesman later (14) ..... (refuse) to comment. Meanwhile local campaigners (15) ..... (ask) the government to hold an inquiry.

- 8 Look carefully at each line. Some of the lines are correct, and some have a word which should not be there. Tick each correct line. If a line has a word which should not be there, write the word in the space.

*A letter from the builders*

Dear Mrs Sangster,

Just a quick note to explain what we have been done	..... <i>been</i> .....
so far this month. The work on the kitchen has gone	..... ✓ .....
well so far, although we haven't already finished	1) .....
knocking down the outside wall yet. So I wrote	2) .....
to you last week and have explained that two of	3) .....
my workmen were ill. They have quite recovered	4) .....
now, I am glad to say, and they have come back	5) .....
to work yesterday. As the weather has been bad	6) .....
we have been work inside most of the time, and	7) .....
all the painting is now been finished. We have	8) .....
also put in a new window in the kitchen, as you	9) .....
have instructed in your last letter. As you	10) .....
have not been visiting here for two weeks	11) .....
we have not had the chance to discuss the walls.	12) .....
When we checked them we have discovered	13) .....
that they are in a dangerous condition. I'll	14) .....
let you know what we have do to them.	15) .....

Best wishes,

Andrew Turner, Builder

Key points

- 1 The present perfect simple describes events without a definite time. Either these events take place in a period of time leading up to the present moment, or the result of the event is still evident.  
The choice between the present perfect simple and the past simple can depend on how the speaker thinks. Compare:  

A: <i>What's the matter?</i>	A: <i>What's the matter?</i>
B: <i>I've had an accident.</i>	B: <i>I had an accident.</i>

In the second example, the speaker thinks of the event as finished rather than still connected with the present.
- 2 Events described with the present perfect simple may be recent, or not.
- 3 The present perfect continuous is used for an action in progress. It suggests that the action is unfinished, or recently finished. Compare:  

<i>I've read this book.</i>	(completion of the action is emphasised)
<i>I've been reading this book.</i>	(the action itself is emphasised – it may not be complete)

The present perfect continuous can also emphasise the length of time of the action.
- 4 *For* refers to a finished or unfinished period of time.  

<i>I waited <b>for three hours</b>.</i>
<i>He's been sitting there <b>for ages</b>.</i>

*Since* refers to the point at which an unfinished period of time began.  

<i>He's been sitting there <b>since two o'clock</b>.</i>
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*Ago* refers to the time of a finished event.  

<i>Jill arrived <b>a week ago</b>.</i>
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→ SEE ALSO

**Grammar 1:** Past time  
**Grammar 5:** Consolidation 1  
**Grammar 14:** Time expressions



- h) for ages
- i) since
- j) how long

- 5
- a) *has been learning*
  - b) since I went to
  - c) Mary has become
  - d) been here since
  - e) *time I have been*
  - f) did Helen and Robert get
  - g) been wearing those trousers for
  - h) haven't spoken for a
  - i) already had something to
  - j) haven't played water-polo/have never played water-polo \*

- 6
- a) *has eaten*
  - b) have you bought
  - c) have been singing
  - d) *has been learning*
  - e) have you invited
  - f) have been sitting
  - g) *has been raining*
  - h) has worn
  - i) have done
  - j) have been trying

- 7
- 1) *has discovered*
  - 2) has been drilling
  - 3) found
  - 4) has discovered
  - 5) lent
  - 6) gave
  - 7) has been
  - 8) have already welcomed
  - 9) has asked
  - 10) happened
  - 11) found
  - 12) got
  - 13) hasn't told
  - 14) refused
  - 15) have asked

- 8
- 1) already
  - 2) so
  - 3) have
  - 4) ✓
  - 5) have
  - 6) ✓
  - 7) work
  - 8) been
  - 9) ✓
  - 10) have
  - 11) visiting
  - 12) ✓
  - 13) have
  - 14) ✓
  - 15) have

## Grammar 2

- 1 a) 1 b) 1 c) 1 d) 2 e) 2  
f) 1
- 2
- a) *Have you seen*
  - b) has been writing
  - c) has been asking \*
  - d) Did you give, saw
  - e) haven't been listening
  - f) have found
  - g) Have you two met
  - h) Did you meet
- 3
- a) *had, stayed*
  - b) have/have had, saw
  - c) have come
  - d) saw, Have you sold
  - e) have you been doing
  - f) have found, went
  - g) has been killing, have made
  - h) promised, haven't finished
- 4
- a) *for*
  - b) since
  - c) recently