

Present perfect continuous

CEFR B1-B2 · 20 questions · A4 / US Letter

Have been plus -ing: the activity that fills the time up to now and often leaves a visible result.

The rule

The form: have been plus -ing

- Positive: have or has plus been plus the -ing form. "I have been working." "She has been reading."
- Negative: have or has plus not plus been plus the -ing form. "They have not been sleeping well."
- Question: Have or has plus subject plus been plus the -ing form. "Have you been waiting long?"
- Short forms: I've been working, she's been reading, we haven't been listening.

An activity continuing up to now

- Use it with for plus a period or since plus a start point: "I have been learning French for two years."
- "She has been working here since March." The work started in March and continues.
- The focus is on the activity and its duration, not on a result or a number of completed actions.
- The question How long...? often chooses this tense: "How long have you been driving?"

A recent activity with a present result

- The activity has just stopped, and we can see the effect now: "My eyes are red because I have been staring at the screen."
- The result usually explains the present situation: wet clothes, a messy kitchen, tired legs, a red face.
- The activity does not have to be long. "Why are you out of breath?" "I have been running."
- The exact finish time is not named. If you name it, use the past simple: "I ran for an hour this morning."

Repeated actions and temporary situations

- Repeated actions up to now: "I have been calling you all day." The calls repeated and may continue.
- Temporary situations: "She has been staying with her sister while her flat is repaired."
- The repeated activity is seen as a continuing process, not as a total count of completed events.
- Compare: "I have called you five times" counts the calls; "I have been calling you all day" describes the effort.

Simple or continuous, and stative verbs

- Present perfect simple focuses on a completed action or a result: "I have painted the door."
- Present perfect continuous focuses on the activity itself: "I have been painting the door."
- Stative verbs do not take the continuous: say "I have known her for years", not "have been knowing".
- Some verbs work with both, and the meaning shifts slightly: "I have lived here for five years" and "I have

been living here for five years" are both fine, with the second stressing the temporary period.

Questions

Write your answer on the line under each question. Check your work with the answer key on the last page.

1. I ___ for three hours.

2. She ___ since eight o'clock.

3. Why are you wet? — I ___ in the rain.

4. They ___ the house all morning.

5. How long ___ you been learning Spanish?

6. He ___ TV since lunch.

7. My eyes are red because I ___ at the screen all day.

8. We ___ this song all day.

9. She ___ as a waitress this summer.

10. I ___ to call you all day.

11. It ___ since Monday.

12. How long ___ she been waiting?

13. They ___ for the bus for twenty minutes.

14. He ___ football since he was five.

15. What ___ you been doing?

16. I ___ my room all morning.

17. The baby ___ all night.

18. You look tired. ___ you been working late?

19. She ___ for a new job recently.

20. He ___ not been feeling well lately.

Answer key

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1. **have been studying** — The studying fills the time up to now, so the present perfect continuous fits: have been studying.
2. **has been working** — Since marks the starting point of an activity continuing to now: has been working.
3. **have been walking** — The recent activity left the visible result of being wet, so use have been walking.
4. **have been cleaning** — The activity fills the morning and continues to now: have been cleaning.
5. **have** — The present perfect continuous question uses have: How long have you been learning?
6. **has been watching** — Since lunch marks an activity continuing up to now: has been watching.
7. **have been staring** — The activity explains the present condition, so the continuous describes it: have been staring.
8. **have been playing** — The repeated playing is seen as a continuing activity: have been playing.
9. **has been working** — A temporary job over a recent period takes the present perfect continuous: has been working.
10. **have been trying** — The repeated attempts form a continuing effort, so use have been trying.
11. **has been raining** — The rain continues over a period from Monday to now: has been raining.
12. **has** — The present perfect continuous question uses has before she: How long has she been waiting?
13. **have been waiting** — For twenty minutes measures the activity continuing to now: have been waiting.
14. **has been playing** — An activity continuing from a starting point in the past takes the continuous: has been playing.
15. **have** — The question about a recent continuing activity uses have: What have you been doing?
16. **have been tidying** — The activity fills the morning, so the continuous describes it: have been tidying.
17. **has been sleeping** — The activity continued through the night up to now: has been sleeping.
18. **Have** — The question about a recent activity uses have: Have you been working late?
19. **has been looking** — A recent ongoing activity takes the present perfect continuous: has been looking.
20. **has** — The negative present perfect continuous is has not been plus -ing: has not been feeling.