

Present perfect with for and since

CEFR A2-B1 • 20 questions • A4 / US Letter

For counts a period. Since names the starting point. Both connect the past to now.

The rule

For plus a period of time

- For answers "how long?" with a length of time: for two hours, for three days, for six months, for a long time, for ages.
- "I have known her for ten years." The friendship started ten years ago and continues.
- For is also common with the past simple when the period is finished: "I lived in Rome for two years."
- In the present perfect, the period reaches the present. That is why the tense is called present.

Since plus a starting point

- Since answers "from when?" with a point in time: since 2020, since Monday, since eight o'clock, since my birthday.
- The point can be a clause in the past simple: "I have liked jazz since I was a teenager."
- Never use since with a period: since two years is wrong. Use for two years.
- Since with the present perfect means the situation continues from that point until now.

How long questions and answers

- Question pattern: How long plus have or has plus subject plus past participle. "How long have you worked here?"
- Answer with for or since: "For three years" or "Since 2023."
- The answer can also drop both words when the meaning is clear: "How long have you had that bike?" "About five years."
- For and since usually sit before the time expression, after the past participle or after the verb: "I have lived here since March."

Present perfect or past simple?

- Use the present perfect when the period continues to now: "I have been ill for a week." I am still ill.
- Use the past simple when the period is finished: "I was ill for a week last winter." The week is over.
- Finished time words like yesterday, last Monday, in 2019 and two days ago force the past simple.
- The present perfect never combines with a finished time expression: "I have seen her yesterday" is wrong.

Negative sentences and other tenses

- The negative often means "not once during that period": "I have not seen him since May."
- "I have not eaten since breakfast" means the last meal was breakfast.

- The present perfect continuous also works with for and since and stresses the activity: "I have been waiting for an hour."
- Stative verbs usually take the simple present perfect: "I have known her since 2018", not "have been knowing".

Questions

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

1. I have lived here ___ 2019.

2. She has worked at the bank ___ five years.

3. How long ___ you known him?

4. We have been friends ___ we were at school.

5. He has had that bike ___ he was ten.

6. They have been married ___ 2015.

7. I have not seen her ___ Monday.

8. She has been learning English ___ two years.

9. How long ___ she had her car?

10. We have waited ___ half an hour.

11. I have not eaten anything ___ breakfast.

12. The shop has been open ___ 1998.

13. They have known each other ___ ten years.

14. It has been raining ___ this morning.

15. I have had this phone ___ two years.

16. How long ___ you been waiting?

17. She has not written to me ___ last summer.

18. We have had this dog ___ March.

19. He has been in hospital ___ a week.

20. I ___ her last Monday.

Answer key

Present perfect with for and since · CEFR A2-B1

1. **since** — 2019 is a starting point, so since is correct. For would need a period such as three years.
2. **for** — Five years is a period, and periods take for in the present perfect.
3. **have** — A continuing situation takes the present perfect question: How long have you known him?
4. **since** — Since takes the starting point, and here the point is a past simple clause: since we were at school.
5. **since** — He was ten is the point when the state started, so since is correct.
6. **since** — A specific year is a point in time, so it takes since.
7. **since** — Monday marks the last time and the start of the gap, so since fits.
8. **for** — Two years is a period, so use for: for two years.
9. **has** — The state continues up to now, so the present perfect question uses has: How long has she had her car?
10. **for** — Half an hour is a period, so for is correct.
11. **since** — Breakfast is the starting point of the period without food, so since fits.
12. **since** — A year names a starting point, so since is correct.
13. **for** — Ten years is a length of time, so it takes for.
14. **since** — This morning is the starting point of the rain, so since is correct.
15. **for** — Two years is a period, so it takes for in the present perfect.
16. **have** — The waiting continues up to now, so the question uses have: How long have you been waiting?
17. **since** — Last summer is a point in time, so since introduces the starting point.
18. **since** — March is a point in time, not a period, so use since.
19. **for** — A week is a period that reaches the present, so for is correct.
20. **saw** — Last Monday is a finished time, so the past simple saw is needed.