

The Present Perfect Continuous Tense

Introduction

1) We use the present perfect continuous when we talk about an action (quite a long one) which began in the past and has recently or just stopped. The present perfect continuous usually emphasizes duration or the amount of time that an action has been taking place.

– Is it snowing right now? – No, it isn't but there is 5 cm of snow outside. It has been snowing all night.

2) The present perfect continuous is formed using *has/have + been + present participle*. Questions are indicated by inverting the subject and *has/have*. Negatives are made with *not*.

(+) Ann has been waiting for Sam for over an hour.

(-) Ann hasn't been waiting for Sam for over an hour. She has been waiting for only 10 minutes.

(?) Has Ann been waiting for Sam for over an hour?/How long has Ann been waiting for Sam?

Some **time markers** can emphasize the duration of the action, show that the action is temporary or repeated. These **time markers** are *all day, all morning, for days, for ages, lately, recently, since, for etc.*

*My brother has been playing tennis **since** he was seven. I haven't been feeling well **recently**. **How long** have you been learning English? – I've been learning it **for 5 years**.*

Remember that **non-continuous verbs (e.g. to love, hate, know, want etc.) are not used** in any continuous tenses. Use the present perfect instead.

I've been wanting to visit Paris for years. I've wanted to visit Paris for years.

Short Story Dialogue

The present perfect continuous is widely used in daily life.

- Hey Pam, long time no see! – Oh, hi Steve! Yeah, that’s true. – **What have you been doing lately?** – Well, **I’ve been trying to find a job in Germany for the past 6 months.** But it’s really difficult to find something with my level of German!
- **How long have you been learning it?**
- **I’ve been learning it on my own for a year.**
- Come to think about it, I’ve heard some really good comments about our local speaking club.
- Hmm I haven’t heard of it. I’ll check it out! Maybe we could grab a cup of coffee next week?
- Yeah, sure. I’ll give you a call. Bye! – Sounds great! Bye!

Independent Practice

1) Write the correct sentence using the present perfect continuous.

a. Lilly (to watch) movies all night.
b. His grandpa (not to feel) well for the past week.
c. How long (you/to smoke)?

2) Match the sentences.

1. Where is Tom?	a. Have you been running?
2. You’re out of breath.	b. Has it been raining today?
3. There are puddles everywhere.	c. We’ve been here for ages.
4. Why are your clothes so dirty?	d. What have you been doing?!

3) Answer the questions.

a. How long have you been learning English?
b. What have you been doing this month?
c. Have you been exercising lately?

Independent Practice: Answers

1) Write the correct sentence using the present perfect continuous.

- a. Lilly has been watching movies all night.
- b. His grandpa hasn't been feeling well for the past week.
- c. How long have you been smoking?

2) Match the sentences.

1. Where is Tom?	c. We've been here for ages.
2. You're out of breath.	a. Have you been running?
3. There are puddles everywhere	b. Has it been raining today?
4. Why are your clothes so dirty?	d. What have you been doing?!

3) Answer the questions. Sample Answers:

- a. I've been learning English for 8 years.
- b. I've been trying to improve my cooking skills.
- c. Sadly, I haven't been exercising lately. I've been feeling lazy for the past month.