

# English Verbs: Present Perfect Continuous

**FORM:** has/have + been + present participle ('-ing')

The **Present Perfect Continuous** is used to refer to an action which started in the past and is still continuing now, or for repetitive actions in the past. It is often used with the word "**for**" (and a period of time) or "**since**" (and a specific time). It is used principally for **active** verbs such as "eat", "walk" or "wait". It is not used for **stative** verbs such as "have", "like" or "be".

- I **have been studying** English **for** two years.
- I **have been watching** TV **since** 6pm.
- He **has been writing** books **since** 2010.
- What **have** you **been doing** **for** the last 30 minutes?
- We **have been waiting** here **for** two hours!



Instead of "**for**" or "**since**", we can use the word "**recently**" for an unspecified period:

- I **have been feeling** really tired **recently**.
- She **has been watching** too much television **recently**.
- **Have** you **been exercising** **recently**?
- Lisa **has not been practicing** the piano **recently**.
- What **have** you **been doing** **recently**?

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## Stative verbs

It is important to remember that **stative** verbs are not generally used in a continuous tense, so you must use **Present Perfect Simple**.

Stative verbs include: **be, have, like**

Examples:

- Sam **has had** his car for two years.
- I **have been** married for a long time.
- I **have** always **liked** chocolate!
- I **have had** a cold for two weeks.
- She **has** always **been** afraid of spiders.
- Mary **has liked** honey since she was a little girl.

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## Active or Stative or both?

Sometimes it is subjective if the verb is "**active**" or "**stative**", so both forms are possible:

- I **have lived** in Fortaleza since 1999. (*"to live" – state*)  
I **have been living** in Fortaleza since 1999. (*"to live" – action*)
- I **have worked** for this company for 8 years. (*I am part of the company – state*)  
I **have been working** for this company for 8 years. (*I work hard – action*)

- She **has studied** in England for six months. (*She is a student – state*)  
She **has been studying** in England for six months. (*She studies hard – action*)
- I **have played** the piano since I was a child. (*I have the ability to play the piano – state*)  
I **have been playing** the piano since I was a child. (*I play the piano every day – action*)

**Suggested video:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ncQ\\_PSr\\_TEO](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ncQ_PSr_TEO)

**Exercise 1.** Use the **Present Perfect Continuous** to complete the sentences below.

1. I think he \_\_\_\_\_ us. (*watch*)
2. A: Why are you sweating?  
B: I \_\_\_\_\_ in the park. (*run*)
3. A: Why are you in a bad mood?  
B: I \_\_\_\_\_ for over an hour! (*wait*)
4. He \_\_\_\_\_ to work for over 20 years. (*walk*)
5. He is tired. He \_\_\_\_\_ for about 20 minutes. (*jog*)
6. That man \_\_\_\_\_ us for over 5 minutes. (*follow*)
7. How long \_\_\_\_\_ English? (*you, study*)
8. How long \_\_\_\_\_ here? (*he, wait*)

**Exercise 2.** Which sentence do you think is better to use?

1. a. He's been changing since I last saw him.  
b. He's changed since I last saw him.
2. a. Our goldfish has died.  
b. Our goldfish has been dying.
3. a. Have you cried?  
b. Have you been crying?
4. a. I have been working hard all day.  
b. I've worked hard all day.
5. a. She's been losing her passport.  
b. She's lost her passport.

**More exercises:**

<https://www.englishpage.com/verbpage/verbs7.htm>

<https://www.englishpage.com/verbpage/verbs8.htm>