

Present Perfect Continuous

Positive	Negative	Question
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I have been sleeping.• You have been sleeping.• He has been sleeping.• She has been sleeping.• It has been sleeping.• We have been sleeping.• You have been sleeping.• They have been sleeping.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I have not been sleeping.• You have not been sleeping.• He has not been sleeping.• She has not been sleeping.• It has not been sleeping.• We have not been sleeping.• You have not been sleeping.• They have not been sleeping.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have I been sleeping?• Have you been sleeping?• Has he been sleeping?• Has she been sleeping?• Has it been sleeping?• Have we been sleeping?• Have you been sleeping?• Have they been sleeping?

Note: when speaking we use the contractions:

I have = I've // you have = you've // he has = he's // she has = she's

it has = it's // we have = we've // you have = you've

they have = they've

have not = haven't // has not = hasn't

We also use contractions for informal writing like emails to friends and colleagues. When you write a formal text, like a job application letter, you **MUST** use full forms.

When speaking we also say things like:

Our cat's been acting strangely lately.

John's been looking for a job for months now.

This house's been falling down for years.

But you should not write these as contractions.

USE 1 Duration



We use the Present Perfect Continuous to talk about duration i.e. to say how long something has been going on.

- They have been talking for the last hour.
- She has been working at that company for three years.
- What have you been doing for the last 30 minutes?
- James has been teaching at the university since June.
- We have been waiting here for over two hours!

NOTE: With the verbs 'work' and 'live' you can use either the Present Perfect OR the Present Perfect Continuous with no change in meaning:

- I've worked for Inlingua for ten years.
or
- I've been working for Inlingua for ten years.

- I've lived in Vienna since 2010.
or
- I've been living in Vienna since 2010.

Alternatively the Present Perfect Continuous may indicate a temporary situation:

- I've been working for McDonalds since I arrived but I hope to find something better soon.
- I've been living in Vienna for the last two months. (it is implied that this is only a temporary situation).

USE 2 Recently // Lately



You can also use the Present Perfect Continuous WITHOUT mentioning a specific duration of time. It then has a more general meaning of "lately." We often use the words "lately" or "recently" to emphasise this.

- I have been feeling really tired recently.
- She has been watching too much television lately.
- Have you been exercising lately?
- Mary has been feeling a little depressed.
- Lisa has not been practicing her English.
- What have you been doing?

IMPORTANT

Remember that the Present Perfect Continuous has the meaning of "lately" or "recently." If you use the Present Perfect Continuous in a question such as "Have you been feeling alright?", it can suggest that the person looks sick or unhealthy. A question such as "Have you been smoking?" can suggest that you smell the smoke on the person. Using this tense in a question suggests you can see, smell, hear or feel the results of the action. It is possible to insult someone by using this tense incorrectly.

USE 3: Result of Activity

We use the Present Perfect Continuous is to explain what has been happening that has caused a present result.

- I'm tired [now] because I've been running.
- Why is the grass wet [now]? Has it been raining?
- You don't understand [now] because you haven't been listening.

NOTE: there is a difference between the use of the Present Perfect Continuous to talk about an ongoing activity (Use 1) and to talk about the result of an activity (Use 3):

- USE 1: I've been painting the house all day. (I haven't finished yet).
- USE 3: I've been painting the house all day. (I've finished for the day and I'm exhausted as a result of the activity).
- USE 1: It's been raining all night. (It's still raining).
- USE 3: It's been raining all night. (It's not raining anymore but the streets are wet as a result of the activity).

REMEMBER Non-Continuous Verbs/ Mixed Verbs

It is important to remember that Non-Continuous Verbs (also known as 'stative' or 'state' verbs) cannot be used in any continuous tenses. Also, certain non-continuous meanings for Mixed Verbs cannot be used in continuous tenses. Instead of using the Present Perfect Continuous with these verbs, you must use the Present Perfect.

- Sam has been having his car for two years. *Not Correct*
- Sam has had his car for two years. *Correct*

Other examples of verbs without continuous forms

- *I've wanted to visit China for years. (not I've been wanting...)*
- *She's known Robert since she was a child. (not she's been knowing...)*
- *I've hated that music since I first heard it. (not I've been hating...)*
- *I've heard a lot about you recently. (not I've been hearing...)*
- *We've understood everything we've heard this morning. (not we've been understanding... and not we've been hearing...)*

ADVERB PLACEMENT

The examples below show the placement for grammar adverbs such as: always, only, never, ever, still, just, etc.

- You have only been waiting here for one hour.
- Have you only been waiting here for one hour?

ACTIVE / PASSIVE

- Recently, John **has been doing** the work. *Active*
- Recently, the work **has been being done** by John. *Passive*

NOTE: Present Perfect Continuous is rarely used in the passive.

Go to <http://www.englishpage.com/verbpage/presentperfectcontinuous.html> and <http://www.perfect-english-grammar.com/present-perfect-continuous-use.html> to find exercises to practise the Present Perfect Continuous.