

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 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.