Present Perfect Simple/Continuous

The **present perfect simple** and **present perfect continuous** are two tenses in English that are used to talk about actions or situations that started in the past and have a connection to the present. However, they are used in slightly different ways.

Present Perfect Simple:

Structure: [has/have + past participle]

- **I have visited** London.
- **She has eaten** lunch.

It is used to emphasise the completion of an action or experience.
It focuses on the result of the action rather than the action itself.
It is often used with time expressions like "**already**," "**yet**," "**just**," "**never**" and "**ever**."

- I haven't finished my homework **yet**.
- They have **never** seen that movie before.

Present Perfect Continuous:

Structure: [has/have + been + present participle (verb-ing)]

I have been studying for two hours.
She has been working on the project.
Use:

It is used to highlight the duration or continuous nature of an action that started in the past and is relevant to the present.
It emphasizes the ongoing process rather than the completion of the action.
It is often used with time expressions like "**for**" (duration) and "**since**" (starting point).

I have been learning English **for** three years.
She has been waiting for you **since** morning.

Key Differences:
The present perfect simple focuses on the completed action and its result.
The present perfect continuous emphasises the ongoing nature or duration of the action.

Here are some scenarios where both forms are possible:

A**ctions with Duration:**
Present Perfect Simple: I have lived in this city for five years.
Present Perfect Continuous: I have been living in this city for five years.
Both are correct, but the continuous form emphasizes the duration or ongoing nature of the action.

Repeated Actions:
Present Perfect Simple: I have visited London several times.
Present Perfect Continuous: I have been visiting London frequently.
Both can be used, but the continuous form may suggest a more active or recurring engagement with the action.

Dynamic Verbs:
Present Perfect Simple: I have worked on this project.
Present Perfect Continuous: I have been working on this project.
Both are correct, but the continuous form emphasizes the ongoing effort or activity involved in the project.

Present Perfect Simple or Continuous? Exercise 1:

Choose the correct answer.

1. She _____ **(work)** on the project since last month.
a) worked
b) has worked
c) has been working

2. He _____ **(play)** the piano for two hours.
a) has been playing
b) has played
c) been playing

3. Sarah _____ **(not/finish)** her assignment yet.
a. didn't finish
b. hasn't finished
c. hasn't been finishing

4. They _____ **(travel)** to many countries in the last year.
a) have travelled
b) have been travelling
c) has been travelling

5. I _____ **(read)** that book already.
a) have read
b) has read
c) have been reading

6. How long _____ you _____ **(wait)** for me?
a). did, wait
b). have, waited
c). have, been waiting

7. She _____ **(not/visit)** her family for two years.
a) didn't visit
b) hasn't visited
c) hasn't been visiting

8. They _____ **(be)** good friends since childhood.
a) have been
b) have been being
c) are

9. How many chapters of the book _____ you _____ **(read)**?
a) have, reading
b) have, read
c) have, been reading

10. The children _____ **(play)** in the garden for hours.
a) played
b) have played
c) have been playing

Present Perfect Simple or Continuous? exercise 2:

Complete the conversation between two friends with the present perfect simple or present perfect continuous.

John: Hi Emily! Long time no see! What **(1)**_____ **(you/do)** since we last met?
Emily: Hey John! I've been pretty busy lately. I **(2)**_____ (**be)** really busy working on a new project at the office.
John: That sounds interesting! How long **(3)**_____ you _____ **(work)** on it?
Emily: I **(4)**_____ **(work)** on it for about three months now. It **(5)**_____ **(be)** quite challenging, but I'm learning a lot.
John: Wow, three months! And how much progress **(6)**_____ you _____ **(make)** so far?
Emily: I **(7)**_____ **(make)** significant progress. We **(8)**_____ **(complete)** the initial phase, and now we **(9)**_____ **(move)** on to the next one.
John: That's impressive! By the way, **(10)**_____ you _____ **(ever/visit)** the new cafe downtown?
Emily: Yes, I **(11)**_____ **(go)** there regularly. The coffee is great!
John: Great to hear! It seems like everyone **(12)**_____ **(make)** positive changes lately.
Emily: Absolutely! Life **(13)**_____ **(get)** better and better.



Present perfect simple and continuous: answer key

Grammar practice · B2 Upper-intermediate

Where two or more answers are given, any of them is correct.

Exercise 1

1. c) has been working
2. a) has been playing
3. b) hasn't finished
4. a) have travelled
5. a) have read
6. c) have, been waiting
7. b) hasn't visited or c) hasn't been visiting
8. a) have been
9. b) have, read
10. c) have been playing

Exercise 2

(1) have you been doing
(2) have been
(3) have … been working
(4) have been working
(5) has been
(6) have … made
(7) have made
(8) have completed
(9) have moved
(10) have … ever visited
(11) have been going
(12) has made / has been making
(13) has been getting