

## Introduction : The two present tenses

Most English verbs have two present tenses. Forms like *I wait, she thinks* are called 'simple present' or 'present simple'; forms like *I am waiting* or *she's thinking* are called 'present progressive' or 'present continuous'. The two present tenses are used in different ways.

### Simple Present

#### A / Form

##### a) Positive statements

I / we / you / they **eat** chocolate.  
He / she / it **eats** chocolate.

##### b) Negative statements

I / we / you / they **do not** eat chocolate.  
He / she / it **does not** eat chocolate.

##### c) Questions

**Do** I / we / you / they eat chocolate?

**Does** he / she / it eat chocolate?

##### d) Short answers

Yes, I / we / you / they do.

No, I / we / you / they do not.

Yes, He / she / it does.

No, He / she / it does not.

✚ Contracted negatives : *I **don't** work, he **doesn't** work etc.*

✚ Negative questions : *do I not work? or don't I work? etc.*

#### Spelling of the third person singular forms

The regular spelling of the **-s inflection** is "s".

Examples: run / runs work/ works revere/ reverses

**Here are additional spelling rules for particular cases:**

1. If the verb ends in **-s, -z, -x -ch, or -sh**, add **-es** to the infinitive.

Examples: Misses, buzzes, fixes, watches, pushes.

2. For some verbs ending in **-o**, add **-es** to the infinitive.

Examples: go / goes, do/does

**Derivatives** with **go** and **do** also have **-es**: examples: *undergo/ undergoes, overdo/ overdoes*

3. If the verb ends in **a consonant plus 'y'**, change the **'y' to 'i'** and add **-es**.

Examples: worry/ worries, fly/flies, deny/ denies, hurry/ hurries.

If a vowel precedes the final **'y'**, the spelling is regular (add **-s**):

Examples: Play/ plays, annoy/annoys.

#### Pronunciation of third person singular forms

The pronunciation of the *-(e)s* ending depends on the sound that comes before it. It follows exactly the same rules as the pronunciation of plural (e)s.

1. If the singular ends with the sounds : /s/ , /z/ , /ʃ/ , /tʃ/ , /ʒ/ , /dʒ/ , the final –s is pronounced /ɪz/.

*Examples:* passes, buzzes, rushes, catches, camouflages, judges.

2. If the verb ends with *a vowel sound* or a *voiced consonant*, the final –s is pronounced /z/.

*Examples:* pays, pursues, drives, builds

3. If the verb ends with *a voiceless consonant*, the final –s is pronounced /s/.

*Examples:* cooks, converts, helps, works.

**B/ Use** : we use the present simple:

1. *With routine, habitual or regular repeated actions ( often with adverbs of frequency like : always, often, sometimes, never, every Saturday morning, once a week)*

Examples: We go to Greece for our holidays every summer.

She doesn't drink coffee after midday.

I never get up before nine o'clock on Sunday.

How often do you go to the gym? He usually leaves work at 6 o'clock.

2. *When we are talking about something that is true in general or about permanent situations; situations that exist now, and, as far as we know, will go on indefinitely. (for the foreseeable immediate future)*

Examples: Alice works for an insurance company.

Liz plays the violin brilliantly. I don't speak Chinese.

It takes me five minutes to get to school.

In Canada, most stores close at 6: 00 p.m.

3. *With factual statements or scientific facts.(a universal generalization that is valid forever)*

Examples: Bees make honey.

The planets revolve around the sun.

Water freezes at 0° Centigrade.

Half plus half equals one.

4. *To ask for and give directions, instructions, and demonstrations.*

Examples: 'How do I get to the station?' 'You go straight on to the traffic lights, then you turn left, ...'

First you put the cassette in the machine.

First I put a lump of butter into a frying pan and light the gas; then while the butter's melting I break three eggs into a bowl, like this ...

**5. *When we are talking about the future as expressed in timetables, schedules, official events, regulations, and programmes.***

Examples: The train leaves at 5.30 this afternoon.  
Do classes begin at the same time as last year?  
The Prime Minister starts his official visit to China tomorrow.  
I start my new job tomorrow.

**6. *In time clauses with a future meaning (after: when, as soon as, until, after, before, etc.) and conditional sentences.***

Examples: I'll phone her when/ as soon as I get home.  
Say 'hello' to Tim if you see him.  
I'm not going to speak to him until he apologizes.

**7. *In live commentaries (for example, on sports events) when the report takes place at the same time as the action.***

Examples: Taylor passes the ball to Morrison, Morrison to Romero, Romero runs towards goal and he shoots- and it's a goal!!  
King serves to the left-hand court and Adams makes a wonderful return. She's playing magnificent tennis in this match...

**8. *In formal letters.***

Examples: I enclose a copy of my curriculum vitae.  
I look forward to hearing from you.

**9. *In phrases such as It says here, I hear, I gather, I see, I understand, and they say, (someone) says, (someone) tells me to introduce news that we have heard, read, seen (e.g. on television), or been told. (we can also use past tenses : it said here, I heard, etc.)***

Examples: Jane tells me you're thinking of emigrating.  
Professor Otto is at the conference and I hear she's an excellent speaker.  
I gather you're worried about the new job.

**10. *In news paper headlines to talk about events that have recently happened.***

Examples: QUAKE HITS CENTRAL IRAN.  
FOREIGN MINISTER RESIGNS.  
SCIENTISTS FIND BRIGHTEST STAR.

**11. *Can be used to refer to the contents and summaries of books, films, newspapers, plays, stories, etc.***

Examples: In Act I, Hamlet sees the ghost of his father. The ghost tells him ...  
Thompson gives a list of the largest European companies in Chapter Six.  
At the beginning of the book, three men find \$4 million in crashed plane.  
In the film, Joan Smithson takes the role of a private detective.

*12. When telling stories and jokes in informal spoken English to create the impression that events are happening now. This can make them more direct and exciting and hold people's attention.*

Examples: She goes up to this man and looks straight into his eyes. He's not wearing his glasses, and he doesn't recognize her...  
This man's playing golf when a kangaroo bounds up to him, grabs his club, and hits his ball about half a mile.

*13. In narration, to make the narration seem more immediate and dramatic.*

*14. With 'state' verbs which are not normally used in continuous forms: e.g. be, have, depend, know, think, understand, disagree, like, want, hear, love, see, smell, taste.*

Examples: I don't have much money.  
Does she understand?  
I'm sorry, but I disagree completely.  
That perfume smells too strong.

*15. With verbs which perform the action they describe ( sometimes called performatives) like: admit, acknowledge, advise, beg, confess, congratulate, declare, deny, forbid, guarantee, name, order, permit, predict, promise, refuse, remind, request, thank, warn, apologize, suggest.*

Examples: I admit I can't see as well as I used to.  
We apologize for not replying earlier.  
I promise never to smoke again.  
I swear that I will tell the truth ...  
He denies the accusation.

**Exercises**

**Exercise 1. Use one of the following verbs to complete these sentences. Sometimes you need the negative.**

Believe eat flow go grow make rise tell translate take place

1. The earth .....round the sun.
2. Rice .....in Britain.
3. The sun ..... in the east.
4. Bees .....honey.
5. Vegetarians .....meat.
6. An atheist .....in God.
7. An interpreter .....from one language into another.
8. A liar is someone who .....the truth.
9. The river Amazon .....into the Atlantic Ocean.
10. The Olympic Games .....every four years.

**Exercise 2. Ask Liz questions about herself and her family.**

1. You know that Liz plays tennis. You want to know how often. Ask her.  
How often.....?
2. Perhaps Liz's sister plays tennis too. You want to know. Ask her.  
.....your sister.....?
3. You know that Liz reads a newspaper every day. You want to know which one. Ask her.  
.....?
4. You know that Liz's brother works. You want to know what he does. Ask her.  
.....?
5. You know that Liz goes to cinema a lot. You want to know how often. Ask her.  
.....?
6. You don't know where Liz's mother lives. Ask her.  
.....?

**Exercise 3. Complete using one of the following: I apologise, I insist, I promise, I recommend, I suggest**

1. It's a nice day. ....we go out for a walk.
2. I won't tell anybody what you said. ....
3. (in a restaurant) You must let me pay for the meal. ....
4. ....for what I said about you. It wasn't true and I shouldn't have said it.
5. The new restaurant in Hill Street is very good. .... it.

**Exercise 4. Ten sentences are wrong and two sentences are right. Correct the mistake when necessary.**

1. David never take the bus to work.....
2. Go you to the office every day? .....
3. My car don't work when it is cold.....

4. *What time the film starts?* .....
5. *Ben's sister don't speak French but Ben do.* .....
6. *How many eggs you want for breakfast?* .....
7. *Does the 9.30 train stop at every station?* .....
8. *What does do your father?* .....
9. *I not write many letters. I usually use the telephone.* .....
10. *What Sue usually have for lunch?* .....
11. *How much do these apples cost?* .....
12. *Charlie plays basketball but he doesn't enjoys it.* .....

**Exercise 5. Complete the conversation. Put in the present simple forms.**

Rita: (►) *Do you like (you / like) football, Tom?*

Tom: (►) *I love (1 / love) it. I'm a United fan. (1)..... (I / go) to all their games. Nick usually (2) ..... (come) with me. And (3)..... (we / travel) to away games, too. Why (4) ..... (you / not / come) to a match some time?*

Rita: *I'm afraid football (5)..... (not / make) sense to me — men running after a ball. Why (6) ..... (you / take) it so seriously?*

Tom: *It's a wonderful game. (7) ..... (I / love) it. United are my whole life.*

Rita: *How much (8)..... (it / cost) to buy the tickets and pay for the travel?*

Tom: *A lot. (9) ..... (I / not / know) exactly how much. But (10) ..... (that / not / matter) to me.*

(11) ..... (I / not / want) to do anything else.

(12) ..... (that / annoy) you?

Rita: *No, (13) ..... (it / not / annoy) me. I just (14)..... (find) it a bit sad.*

**Exercise 6. Complete the sentences by putting in the verbs. Use the present simple and say why it should be used in each case.** *Work hear belong land cost believe beg eat*

1. *Sarah often .....late at the office.*
2. *The computer ..... to Emma.*
3. *These plates .....\$ 20 each.*
4. *I .....it's the right thing to do.*
5. *I ..... that you have been promoted. Congratulations!*
6. *Cows ..... grass.*
7. *I ..... you to keep this a secret.*
8. *The plane ..... at 5.30 P.M.*

**Exercise 7. Complete this newspaper story about Lord Stonebury. Put in the correct simple present of these verbs:** *go(4), have (3), live (2), get, meet, own, play, read, spend, talk.*

*Lord Stonebury is 28 years old. He .....in Belgravia in London's West End. He's very rich, and he .....the company Office Blocks International. Every morning the young Lord .....breakfast in bed and .....the newspapers. He .....up at ten o'clock and usually .....for a walk in Hyde Park. He .....lunch at his club. He sometimes .....the directors of OBI, and they .....about the company's plans.*

*In the afternoon Lord Stonebury and his friends sometimes .....golf. Then they ..... a few drinks. Or sometimes he and a friend ..... for a drive in his sports car.*

*After dinner Lord Stonebury .....to a night club with one of his friends. They .....home at about two o'clock.*

*In the winter the young Lord .....in Monte Carlo. And he .....his summer holidays in the West Indies.*

**Exercise 8.** Write the story of a typical day in your life.

## Exercises

*Exercise 1. Use one of the following verbs to complete these sentences. Sometimes you need the negative.*

*Believe eat flow go grow make rise tell translate take place*

11. *The earth.....goes.....round the sun.*
12. *Rice .....doesn't grow.....in Britain.*
13. *The sun .....rises..... in the east.*
14. *Bees .....make.....honey.*
15. *Vegetarians .....don't eat.....meat.*
16. *An atheist .....doesn't believe.....in God.*
17. *An interpreter .....translates.....from one language into another.*
18. *A liar is someone who .....doesn't tell.....the truth.*
19. *The river Amazon .....flows.....into the Atlantic Ocean.*
20. *The Olympic Games .....take place.....every four years.*

*Exercise 2. Ask Liz questions about herself and her family.*

7. *You know that Liz plays tennis. You want to know how often. Ask her.  
How often.....do you play tennis.....?*
8. *Perhaps Liz's sister plays tennis too. You want to know. Ask her.  
does.....your sister .....play tennis.....?*
9. *You know that Liz reads a newspaper every day. You want to know which one. Ask her.  
...which newspaper do you read.....?*
10. *You know that Liz's brother works. You want to know what he does. Ask her.  
What does your brother do? OR what's your brother's job?*
11. *You know that Liz goes to cinema a lot. You want to know how often. Ask her.  
How often do you go to the cinema.....?*
12. *You don't know where Liz's mother lives. Ask her.  
Where does your mother live.....?*

*Exercise 3. Complete using one of the following: I apologise, I insist, I promise, I recommend, I suggest*

6. *It's a nice day. ....I...suggest.....we go out for a walk.*
7. *I won't tell anybody what you said. ...I promise.....*
8. *(in a restaurant) You must let me pay for the meal. ....I insist.....*
9. *.....I apologise.....for what I said about you. It wasn't true and I shouldn't have said it.*
10. *The new restaurant in Hill Street is very good. ....I recommend..... it.*

*Exercise 4. Ten sentences are wrong and two sentences are right. Correct the mistake when necessary.*

13. *David never take the bus to work.....never takes.....*
14. *Go you to the office every day? .....do you go to the .office everyday.....?*
15. *My car don't work when it is cold.....doesn't work.....*
16. *What time the film starts? .....does the film start.....?*
17. *Ben's sister don't speak French but Ben do. ....doesn't speak French but Ben does.....*
18. *How many eggs you want for breakfast ? .....do you want for breakfast.....?*
19. *Does the 9.30 train stop at every station ? .....?*
20. *What does do your father? .....what does your father do .....?*
21. *I not write many letters. I usually use the telephone. Don't write.....?*
22. *What Sue usually have for lunch? .....what does Sue usually have .....?*
23. *How much do these apples cost? .....?*
24. *Charlie plays basketball but he doesn't enjoys it. ....doesn't enjoy.....?*

*Exercise 5. Complete the conversation. Put in the present simple forms.*

*Rita: (►) Do you like (you / like) football, Tom?*

*Tom: (►) / love (1 / love) it. I'm a United fan. (1)..... (I / go) to all their games. Nick usually (2) ..... (come) with me. And (3)..... (we / travel) to away games, too. Why (4) ..... (you / not / come) to a match some time?*

*Rita: I'm afraid football (5)..... (not / make) sense to me — men running after a ball. Why (6) ..... (you / take) it so seriously?*

*Tom: It's a wonderful game. (7) ..... (I / love) it. United are my whole life.*

*Rita: How much (8)..... (it / cost) to buy the tickets and pay for the travel?*

*Tom: A lot. (9) ..... (I / not / know) exactly how much. But (10) (that / not / matter) to me.*

*(11) ..... (I / not / want) to do anything else.*

*(12) ..... (that / annoy) you?*

*Rita: No, (13) ..... (it / not / annoy) me. I just (14) (find) it a bit sad.*

*Exercise 6. Complete the sentences by putting in the verbs. Use the present simple and say why it should be used in each case.*

9. *Sarah often works late at the office.*
10. *The computer belongs to Emma.*
11. *These plates cost \$ 20 each.*
12. *I believe it's the right thing to do.*
13. *I hear that you have been promoted. congratulations!*
14. *Cows eat grass.*
15. *I beg you to keep this a secret.*
16. *The plane lands at 5.30 P.M.*



*Exercise 7. Complete this newspaper story about Lord Stonebury. Put in the correct simple present of these verbs: go(4), have (3), live (2), get, meet, own, play, read, spend, talk.*

*Lord Stonebury is 28 years old. He .....in Belgravia in London's West End. He's very rich, and he .....the company Office Blocks International. Every morning the young Lord .....breakfast in bed and .....the newspapers. He .....up at ten o'clock and usually .....for a walk in Hyde Park. He .....lunch at his club. He sometimes .....the directors of OBI, and they .....about the company's plans.*

*In the afternoon Lord Stonebury and his friends sometimes .....golf. Then they ..... a few drinks. Or sometimes he and a friend .....for a drive in his sports car.*

*After dinner Lord Stonebury .....to a night club with one of his friends. They .....home at about two o'clock.*

*In the winter the young Lord .....in Monte Carlo. And he .....his summer holidays in the West Indies.*

*Exercise 8. Write the story of a typical day in your life.*

**Examples :**

I am reading.

She isn't working today.

**Am / is / are + -ing is the present continuous**

What are you doing?

Are you listening?

**A/ Form****✓ Positive Statements**The present form of **be** + the **-ing** form of the verb.

I	<b>am</b>	} + the <b>-ing</b> form of the verb
He, she, it	<b>is</b>	
You, we, they	<b>are</b>	

I **am** reading.He, she, it **is** reading.You, we, they **are** reading.**Contracted forms****I'm** (I am), **you're** (you are), **s/he's** (s/he is), **it's** (it is), **we're** (we are), **they're** (they are)+ the **-ing form**.**✓ Negative statements**

I	<b>am</b>	} <b>not</b> + the <b>-ing</b> form of the verb
He, she, it	<b>is</b>	
You, we, they	<b>are</b>	

I **am not** working.He, she, it **is not** working.You, we, they **are not** working.**Contracted forms**

There are two ways of contracting a negative sentence in the present continuous:

**She is not working** can become:a) **She isn't working.** Orb) **She's not working.**

Both are correct. The negative in (b) is a bit stronger than the negative in (a).

**Negative with not****Negative with n't**

<b>I'm</b>	} <b>not</b> + the <b>-ing form</b> .	--	} + the <b>-ing form</b>	
<b>He's, She's, It's</b>		<b>He, She, It</b>		<b>isn't</b>
<b>You're, we're, they're</b>		<b>We, You, They</b>		<b>aren't</b>

**✓ Questions**

Am	I	} + the <b>-ing</b> form of the verb
Is	he/ she/ it	
Are	you/ we/ they	

Am I listening?

Is he/ she/ it listening?

Are you/ we/ they listening?

**✓ Negative interrogative**

Am	I	not working?
Is	he/she/it	not working?
Are	we /you/they	not working?

**contracted forms**

Aren't I working?

Isn't he/ she /it working?

Aren't we / you / they working?

Note the irregular contraction aren't I? for am I not?

**✓ Short Answers**

Yes, I am	No, I am not (I'm not).
Yes, s/he, it is	No, s/he/ it isn't.
Yes, you/we/they are	No, you/we/they aren't.

**B/ Use****We use the present continuous :****1. To say: we are in the middle of doing something; we have started doing it and we have not finished yet.****✚ Often the action is happening at the time of speaking(the action is actually in progress)**

Example: Please don't make so much noise. I'm working. ( not 'I work')

(at a party) Hello, Jane. Are you enjoying the party? (not 'do you enjoy')

Where is Mark? He's having a shower. (not 'he has a shower')

✦ ***But the action is not necessarily happening at the time of speaking. (the action is generally in progress but not actually happening at the moment)***

Examples: Tom and Ann are talking in a café. Tom says: I am reading an interesting book at the moment. I'll lend it to you when I've finished it.  
(Tom is not reading the book at the time of speaking. He means that he has started it but not finished it yet. He is in the middle of reading it).  
Catherine wants to work in Italy, so she is learning Italian. (but perhaps she isn't learning Italian exactly at the time of speaking).

Note: When two continuous tenses having the same subject are joined by **and**, the auxiliary may be dropped before the second verb, as in the above example. This applies to all pairs of compound tenses:  
*She was knitting and listening to the radio.*

***2. To talk about things happening in a period around now (for example, today/ this week/ this evening etc.)***

Examples: 'You are working hard today.' 'yes, I have a lot to do.' (not 'you work hard today')  
'Is Suzan working this week?' 'No, she's on holiday.'

***3. To talk about a temporary situation.***

Examples: I'm living with some friends until I find a flat.  
I am working in my father's restaurant this month.

***4. To talk about developing and changing situations. (to talk about changes happening around now especially with these verbs: get, change, become, increase, rise, fall, grow, improve, begin, start)***

Examples: the weather is getting warmer.  
The population of the world is increasing very fast.  
At first I didn't like my job, but I am beginning to enjoy it now.  
House prices are going up again.

***5. To talk about plans and arrangements in the future. (actions and events which are already planned; we often give the time or date)***

Examples: Are you doing anything special this weekend?  
We're going to Mexico next summer.  
I'm having dinner with Larry on Saturday.

***6. To talk about annoying or surprising habits with 'always'.***

Examples: I've lost my key again. I'm always losing things.  
'I'm always losing things' doesn't mean that I lose things every time. It means I lose things too often, more often than normal.  
'**You're always -ing**' means that you do something very often, more often than the speaker thinks is normal or reasonable.  
You are always watching television. You should do something more active.  
John is never satisfied. He's always complaining.  
They're always holding hands even after fifty years of marriage.

Other possible adverbs are: **constantly, continually, and forever.**

***7. The present progressive can refer to repeated actions and events if these are happening around the moment of speaking.***

Examples: I'm travelling a lot these days.

***8. Can be used to describe something we regularly do at a certain time.***

Examples: At 8 o'clock I'm usually driving to work, so phone me on my mobile.

7 o'clock is a bit early. We're generally eating then.

9. *We can use the present (or past) continuous rather than the present (or past) simple with the verb wonder if we want to be especially friendly or polite, particularly if we are unsure about the other person's feelings towards something or how they will react to what we say.*

Example: you said that there were only 50 books in the boxes. I'm just wondering / I was just wondering whether you counted them all? (more polite than 'I just wonder...?')

---

**Reminder: Spelling rules of the -ing form of the verb**

1. 'y' doesn't change before -ing: *hurrying, studying, enjoying, trying, playing, etc.*
2. If a Verb ends in '-ie', 'ie' changes to 'y' before -ing: *die/dying, lie/lying, tie/tying, etc.*
3. If a Verb ends in '-e', we leave out 'e' before the ending -ing: *hope/hoping, smile/smiling, dance/dancing, confuse/confusing, etc*  
Exceptions are: *be/being, age, dye, singe*  
And verbs ending in '-ee': *see/seeing, agree/agreeing, etc.*
4. If a Verb ends in vowel+consonant:
  - If the verb has one syllable, double the consonant at the end: *stop/stopping, plan/planning*
  - If the verb has more than one syllable, double the consonant at the end only if the final syllable is stressed: *prefer/preferring, permit/permitting, begin/beginning, regret/regretting, etc.*
  - If the final syllable is not stressed, we do not double the final consonant: *visit/visiting, happen/happening, develop/developing, remember/remembering, etc.*
  - Exception: In British English, verbs ending in '-l' have '-ll-' before -ing whether the final syllable is stressed or not: *travel/travelling, cancel/cancelling, etc.*
5. -ic changes to -ick: *picnic/picnicking.*
6. We don't double the consonant if the verb ends in two consonants (start/starting), OR if there are two vowel letters before it (boil/boiling).
7. We don't double 'y', 'w', or 'x' at the end of verbs: *stay/staying, grow/growing, fax/faxing, etc.*

**Exercises**

**Exercise 1 .** How do you spell it? write these verbs in the continuous form (-ing) in the correct list.

Help	put	decide	die	swim	listen	have	forget	write	arrive	
play	begin		start	come	stop	win	work	laugh	live	lie
wear	tie	cry	dance	dig	make	rob				

+ -ing	t-tt, p-pp, etc.	e-ing	ie-y-ing
.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....

**Exercise 2.** Use the following verbs to complete the jokes. Watch your spelling!

*Chew down eat fly give look tell try wait use*

- The police .....  
for a man with one eye called Smith.  
• What's his other eye called?
- Tell the passengers that I have both good news and bad news for them.  
• What's the good news?  
We .....in perfect weather and we are making excellent time.  
• And what's the bad news?  
We're lost.
- It's Paul's first day at his new school.  
Excuse me, young man, but are .....  
..... gum?  
• No, sir. I'm Paul Welsh.
- Two sisters are in bed together.  
Are you asleep?  
• I..... not ..... you.
- Come out of the water. Swimming is not allowed here.  
• But I'm not swimming, officer. I .....!
- A man is having a meal in a restaurant.  
Waiter. This meat is very tough. What is it?  
• ..... The problem isn't the meat, sir.  
You..... to eat the plate.
- Why is your cat looking at me?  
• Probably because you..... its bowl.

**Exercise 3.** Use the words in brackets to complete the questions.

- '.....this week?' 'no, he's on holiday.' ( Colin/work)
- Why .....at me like that? What's the matter? (you/look)
- 'Jenny is a student at university.' 'is she? What .....?' (she /study)
- .....to the radio or can I turn it off? (anybody/listen)
- How is your English? .....better? (it/get).

**Exercise 4.** Put the verb into the correct form. Sometimes you need the negative.

- I'm tired. I .....to bed now. Goodnight!(go)
- We can go out now. It .....anymore. (rain)
- 'How is your new job?' 'Not so good at the moment. I .....it very much.'(enjoy)
- Catherine phoned me last night. She's on holiday in France. She ..... a great time and doesn't want to come back.(have)
- I want to lose weight, so this week I .....lunch. (eat)
- Angela has just started evening classes. She .....German. (learn)
- I think Paul and Ann have had an argument. They .....to each other.(speak)

**Exercise 5** .Read this conversation between Brian and Sara. Put the verbs into the correct form.

Sarah: Brian! How nice to see you! What .....these days? (you /do)  
 Brian: I .....(train) to be a supermarket manager.  
 Sarah: really? What's it like? .....(.you/enjoy)it?  
 Brian: it's all right. What about you?

Sarah: well, actually I .....(not/work) at the moment.

I .....(try) to find a job but it's not easy.

But I'm very busy. I .....(decorate) my flat.

Brian: .....(you/do)it alone?

Sarah: No, some friends of mine .....(help) me.

**Exercise 6** . Complete the sentences using one of these verbs: *get change rise/fall increase*

- The population of the world .....very fast.
- Ken is still ill but he .....better slowly.
- The world ..... Things never stay the same.
- The cost of living ..... Every year things are more expensive.
- The economic situation is already very bad and it .....worse.

**Exercise 7** . Complete the sentences. Put the verbs into the present simple or present continuous, positive or negative.

- A: have a chocolate. B: No, thank you. I .....(like chocolate)
- A: let's have lunch in the garden. B: No, we can't. it .....(rain)
- A: what.....? B: Pam? She is a doctor. (do)
- Tony ..... at the moment. He is on holiday. (work)
- A: Why .....? B: because I'm happy. (smile)
- A: what .....? B: a letter from my sister. (read)
- A: what time.....? B: Me? At 7.00 a.m. usually.(get up)
- A: where's Jim? B: he is in the kitchen. He .....(make) coffee.
- A: I think shaun and David are asleep. B: Turn the TV off, they ..... (watch) it.
- John and I want to go to Greece for our holidays, so we .....(learn)Greek.

**Exercise 8** . Use the correct present tense form.

- Let me explain what you have to do. First you .....(take)the photos and .....(sort) them into categories. Then you .....(file) them according to subject.
- We .....(hope) you .....(enjoy) this marvellous weather as much as we are. We .....(sunbathe)and (go) ..... swimming every day. Next week we .....(go) snorkeling.
- The play is set in London in 1890. The action .....(take) place in Sir Don Wyatt's mansion. When the curtain ..... (go) up, the hero and heroine .....(sit) in the lounge. They .....(argue).
- The house is in a mess because we've got the workmen in. The plumber ..... (put)in a new bath, the electricians .....(rewire) the system, and the carpenter(build) .....us some new bookshelves.
- Dear Jane, Sorry to hear about your problem at work. I .....(think)you .....(do) the right thing, but I .....(doubt) whether your boss really .....(know) his job from what you .....(tell) me!
- Pym .....(pass) to Smith, who .....(run) straight at the central defence and(shoot)....., and Gomez .....(push) it over the bar for a corner.

**Exercise 9** . Put the simple present or present progressive, note where both forms are possible.

*A HOLIDAY JOB WITH A DIFFERENCE!*

I (study)..... English at Exeter University. I'm on holiday at the moment and I (work) ..... in a public library. I'm lucky to have this job. I (not have to) .....get up early. The library (open) .....at 10 and (close)..... at 7. It's interesting work because people (always come in) .....and (ask)..... me to help them. so I (learn) ..... a lot about different subjects. I (enjoy)..... the job and (find) ..... it very amusing, too. People (use) .....the strangest things as bookmarks. I have found a rasher of bacon (uncooked!).Matchsticks (be)..... common and so (be) ..... bus tickets. My colleagues (always find)..... things too- even a £ 10 note, but I haven't been so lucky. I often (think)of the photo of a beautiful woman which I found. On the back were the words: " I (love) .....you. I (miss)..... you and I'll never forget you."

## Verbs not normally used in the continuous tenses

Some verbs (for example know and like) are not normally used in the present continuous. These are stative verbs and have only one present tense, the simple present. These verbs can be grouped as follows:

### A) **Verbs of the senses** (involuntary actions):

feel, hear, smell, see, also notice and observe (= notice), and feel, look, smell, taste used as link verbs.

Verbs such as gaze, listen, look (at), observe (= watch), stare, and watch imply deliberate use of the senses, and can, of course, be used in the continuous tenses:

### b) **Verbs expressing feelings and emotions:**

admire (= respect), adore, appreciate (= value), care for (= like), desire, detest, dislike, fear, hate, like, loathe, love, mind (care), respect, value, want, wish.

But the continuous can be used with admire meaning “look at with admiration”, appreciate meaning “increase in value”, care for meaning “look after”, long for, mind meaning “look after/ concern oneself with”, value meaning “estimate the financial worth of”, enjoy and sometimes like/love meaning “enjoy”, and hate meaning the opposite, though it is safer to use the simple tenses with like, love, and hate.

C) **verbs of mental activity:** agree, appreciate (= understand), assume, believe, expect (= think), feel (= think), feel, sure/certain, forget, know, mean, perceive, realize, recall, recognize, recollect, remember, see (understand), see through someone (= penetrate his attempt to deceive), suppose, think (= have an opinion), trust (= believe/ have confidence), understand.

D) **Verbs of possession:** belong, owe, own, possess

E) **The auxiliaries:** except **be** and **have** in certain uses.

F) **Appear (= seem), concern, consist, contain, hold (= contain), keep (= continue), matter, seem, signify, sound (= seem/appear)**

But appear meaning “to come before the public” can be used in the continuous.

## Feel, look, smell and taste used in the continuous forms

### a) **Feel**

- when followed *by an adjective indicating the subject's emotions or physical or mental condition*, e.g. angry/ pleased, happy/sad, hot/cold, tense/relaxed, nervous/confident, **is normally used in the simple tenses but can also be used in the continuous** :

e.g. How do you feel/ are you feeling **now**?

I feel/ am feeling better.

**But: I usually feel tired in the morning. ( not: I'm usually feeling)**

- meaning “**touch**” ( usually in order to learn something) can be used in the continuous.

E.g.. The doctor was feeling his pulse.

- Similarly, “Feel for” meaning “**try to find , something by touching**”

E.g. He was feeling for the keyhole in the dark.

**BUT , Feel is not used in the continuous:**

when it means:

“**sense**” e.g. Don't you feel the house shaking?

“**think**” e.g. I feel you are wrong

And when it is used as a **Link verb**

E.g. The water feels cold.

### b) **Look**

The continuous is not used with look used as a link verb, e.g. That cake looks good, or with “look on” (= consider), “look up to” (= respect) and “look down on” (= despise)

But **look (at), look for/ in/ into/ out and look on (= watch) are deliberate actions** and can be used in the continuous tenses.

E.g. He is looking for his glasses

I'm looking out for a better job.

**You can use the present simple or continuous to say how somebody looks now**

E.G. You look /are looking well today.

### c) **Smell**

The continuous is not used with smell meaning ‘perceive a scent/ an odour), e.g. I smell gas, or with smell used as a link verb,

but can be used with smell meaning “sniff at”. e.g. Why are you smelling the milk? Does it smell sour?

### d) **Taste**

Taste as a link verb is not used in the continuous.

e.g. This coffee tastes bitter (has a bitter taste)

But taste meaning “**to test the flavor of**” can be used in the continuous

e.g. She was tasting the pudding to see if it was sweet enough.

## See and hear used in the continuous forms

**A) See** can be used in the continuous when it means “**meet by appointment**” ‘interview’

e.g. The doctor is seeing the applicants this morning.

Also when it means “**visit**” (usually as a tourist):

e.g. Tom is seeing the town/ sights

It can also be used in **the continuous in the following combinations**:

**See about** = *make arrangements or enquiries*: we are seeing about a work permit for you (trying to arrange this)

**See to** = *arrange*, put right, deal with: e.g. the plumber is here. He is seeing to the leak in our tank.

**See somebody out** = escort him/her to the door

**See somebody home** = escort him/her home

**See somebody to + place** = escort him/her to + place.

e.g. Ann: is Bill seeing you home after the party?

Mary: no, he is just seeing me to my bus.

**See someone off** = say goodbye to a departing traveler at the starting point of his journey (usually the station, airport, etc) e.g. We are leaving tomorrow. Bill is seeing us off at the airport.

## **B) Hear**

Hear can be used in the continuous when it means “**listen formally to**” (complaints/evidence, etc)

e.g. The court is hearing evidence this afternoon.

Hear meaning “**receive news or letters**” can also be used in the continuous form but only in the present perfect and future

e.g. I’ve been hearing all about your accident

You’ll be hearing about the new scheme at our next meeting.

## **Think, assume and expect used in the continuous forms**

### **A) Think**

When think means ‘believe’ or ‘have an opinion’, we do not use the continuous:

e.g. I think Mary is Canadian, but I’m not sure. (not: I’m thinking)

What do you think about my plan? (=what is your opinion?)

*when no opinion is given or asked for or, when think means ‘consider’, the continuous is possible: e.g.*

e.g. Tom is thinking of emigrating. (he is considering it) What do you think of the idea?

I think it is a stupid idea. He should stay where he is.

**B) Assume** can be used in the continuous when it means “**accept as a starting point**” e.g. I’m assuming that you have time to do a lot of research.

**Assume power/ control of a country or organization** can also be used in the continuous. E.g. The new government is assuming power at once.

**C) Expect** can be used in the continuous when it means ‘**await**’ e.g. I’m expecting a letter  
She is expecting a baby in May.

## **Is / is being**

- **With certain adjectives, e.g. quite, noisy, good, bad, wise, foolish, it is possible to use the continuous form of be, e.g. Tom is being foolish, to imply that the subject is showing this quality at this time.**

Compare: Tom is being foolish which means Tom is talking or acting foolishly **now**, with Tom is foolish which means that he always acts or talks foolishly.

**He’s being = he is behaving / he is acting.**

Compare:

- I can’t understand why he is being so selfish. He isn’t usually like that.  
(being selfish = behaving selfishly at the moment)
- He never thinks about other people. He is very selfish. (not he is being)  
(= he is selfish generally, not only at the moment)

Other adjectives include: annoying, cautious, rash, clever, stupid, difficult, economical, extravagant, formal, funny, generous, mean, helpful, unhelpful, irritating, mysterious, optimistic, pessimistic, polite, selfish, unselfish.

It is not usually possible in other sentences:

It’s hot today. (not: it is being hot)

Sarah is very tired. (not: is being tired)

## **Have**

When Have is used to mean

**Take** – a meal/ food or drink, a bath / a lesson etc.  
we have lunch at one

**Give** – a party, entertain (guests)  
they are having a party tomorrow

**Encounter** – difficulties/ trouble  
did you have trouble with customs

**Experience, enjoy**, usually with an adjective, e.g.  
good I hope you will have a good holiday.  
**undergo, or hold,**

**it can be used in the present continuous**

compare: We’re having lunch now (action of eating)

We have a big kitchen. (state – own)



*Compare :***Present Simple**

We use the present simple to talk about things in general or which are always true.

- ✚ Water boils at 100 degrees Celsius.
- ✚ It doesn't rain very much in summer.

**To talk about repeated or regular actions and events**

- ✚ I drink coffee every morning.

**With "always"**

**I always do (something) = I do it every time.**

- ✚ I always go to work by car. (not: I'm always going)

**For permanent situations**

- ✚ Joe lives in New York. New York is his home. He lives there all the time.
- ✚ I work in London, but

**Future events which are part of a timetable, schedule, etc.**

- ✚ What time does the movie begin?
- ✚ The train leaves at 7:30 p.m.

**To talk about the future after certain words (when, until, after, before, as soon as)**

- ✚ I'll call you when I get home.

**When narrating or telling stories and jokes :**

The main events are usually described in sequence using the present simple

**Present Continuous**

We use the present continuous to talk about things happening at or around the time of speaking (the action is not complete)

- ✚ The water is boiling. Can you turn it off?
- ✚ Let's go out. It isn't raining now.

**To talk about temporary or new habits**

- ✚ I'm drinking too much coffee these days because I'm so busy at work.

**I'm always doing something = I do it very often, perhaps too often, or more often than normal. (to emphasize the repetitiveness of the action and/or to express annoyance and irritation)**

- ✚ I've lost my pen again. I'm always losing things.
- ✚ Jacob is a really kind person. He's always offering to help me with my work.

**For temporary situations**

- ✚ Joe is living in Paris for a few months (usually he lives in New York).
- ✚ I'm working in the Cambridge office this month.

**For changing situations**

- ✚ I'm getting better at speaking English.

**To talk about what we have already arranged to do (definite future plans)**

- ✚ I'm meeting John after class today.
- ✚ What are you doing tomorrow?
- ✚ I'm going to the theater.

and longer background events are described using the present continuous.

## Verbs not normally used in the continuous tenses

**Stative verbs** (expressing a state) in contrast to action verbs are not normally used in the continuous tenses and have only one present tense, the simple present. These verbs can be grouped as follows:

A) **Verbs of the senses** (involuntary actions): feel, hear, smell, see, also notice and observe (= notice), and feel, look, smell, taste used as link verbs.

Verbs such as gaze, listen, look (at), observe (= watch), stare, and watch imply deliberate use of the senses, and can, of course, be used in the continuous tenses:

Examples: Watch! I am watching but I don't see anything unusual.

He is listening to a tape, but he is wearing earphones so nobody else hears it.

b) **Verbs expressing feelings and emotions**: admire (= respect), adore, appreciate (= value), care for (= like), desire, detest, dislike, fear, hate, like, loathe, love, mind (care), respect, value, want, wish.

But the continuous can be used with admire meaning "look at with admiration", appreciate meaning "increase in value", care for meaning "look after", long for, mind meaning "look after/ concern oneself with", value meaning "estimate the financial worth of", enjoy and sometimes like/love meaning "enjoy", and hate meaning the opposite, though it is safer to use the simple tenses with like, love, and hate.

Examples: He is enjoying his holiday in the arctic. He hates touristy places and he doesn't mind the cold.

I'm minding my own business

How are you liking/do you like your new job?

I'm hating it/ I hate it. I just don't like work, you see.

C) **verbs of mental activity**: agree, appreciate (= understand), assume, believe, expect (= think), feel (= think), feel, sure/certain, forget, know, mean, perceive, realize, recall, recognize, recollect, remember, see (understand), see through someone (= penetrate his attempt to deceive), suppose, think (= have an opinion), trust (= believe/ have confidence), understand.

But the continuous can be used with appreciate meaning "to increase in value".

D) **Verbs of possession**: belong, owe, own, possess

Example: how much do I owe you?

E) **The auxiliaries**: except **be** and **have** in certain uses.

F) **Appear (= seem), concern, consist, contain, hold (= contain), keep (= continue), matter, seem, signify, sound (= seem/appear)**

Examples: It concerns us all.

This box contains explosives.

But appear meaning "to come before the public" can be used in the continuous.

## Feel, look, smell and taste used in the continuous forms

### a) Feel

- Feel, when followed by an adjective indicating the subject's emotions or physical or mental condition, e.g. angry/ pleased, happy/sad, hot/cold, tense/relaxed, nervous/confident, is normally used in the simple tenses but can also be used in the continuous :

Examples: How do you feel/ are you feeling now? I feel/ am feeling better.

But: I usually feel tired in the morning. ( not: I'm usually feeling)

- Feel meaning “**touch**” ( usually in order to learn something) can be used in the continuous.

Ex. The doctor was feeling his pulse.

- Similarly, Feel for meaning “**try to find something by touching**”

Ex. He was feeling for the keyhole in the dark.

BUT , Feel is **not used in the continuous**:

when it means “**sense**”

Ex. Don't you feel the house shaking?

When it means “**think**”

Ex. I feel you are wrong

And when it is used as a **Link verb**.

Ex. The water feels cold.

### b) Look

The continuous is not used with look used as a link verb, e.g. that cake looks good, or with “**look on**” (= consider), “**look up to**” (= respect) and “**look down on**” (= despise)

But **look (at), look for/ in/ into/ out and look on (= watch) are deliberate actions** and can be used in the continuous tenses.

Ex. He is looking for his glasses

I'm looking out for a better job.

You can use the present simple or continuous to say how somebody looks now

Ex. You look well today. Or you're looking well today.

### c) Smell

The continuous is not used with smell meaning ‘perceive a scent/ an odour), e.g. I smell gas, or with smell used as a link verb,

but can be used with smell meaning “**sniff at**”

Ex. Why are you smelling the milk? Does it smell sour?

### d) Taste

Taste as a link verb is not used in the continuous

This coffee tastes bitter (has a bitter taste)

But taste meaning “**to test the flavor of**” can be used in the continuous

Ex. She was tasting the pudding to see if it was sweet enough.

## See and hear used in the continuous forms

- A) **See** can be used in the continuous when it means “**meet by appointment**” (usually for business) ‘interview’

Ex. The doctor is seeing the applicants this morning.

Also when it means “**visit**” (usually as a tourist): Ex. Tom is seeing the town/ sights

It can also be used in the continuous *in the following combinations*:

**See about= make arrangements or enquiries:** we are seeing about a work permit for you (trying to arrange this)

**See to = arrange,** put right, deal with: the plumber is here. He is seeing to the leak in our tank.

**See somebody out =** escort him/her to the door

**See somebody home =** escort him/her home

Ann: is Bill seeing you home after the party?

**See somebody to + place =** escort him/her to + place.

Mary: no, he is just seeing me to my bus.

**See someone off=** say goodbye to a departing traveler at the starting point of his journey (usually the station, airport, etc)

Ex. We are leaving tomorrow. Bill is seeing us off at the airport.

## B) Hear

Hear can be used in the continuous when it means “**listen formally to**” (complaints/evidence, etc)

Ex. The court is hearing evidence this afternoon.

Hear meaning “**receive news or letters**” can also be used in the continuous form but only in the present perfect and future

Ex. I've been hearing all about your accident

You'll be hearing about the new scheme at our next meeting.

## Think, assume and expect used in the continuous forms

**A) Think** can be used in the continuous *when no opinion is given or asked for (or, when think means 'consider')*

Ex. What are you thinking about? I'm thinking about the play we saw last night.

**BUT** What do you think of it? (opinion asked for) I don't think much of it. (opinion given)

Tom is thinking of emigrating. (he is considering it) What do you think of the idea?

I think it is a stupid idea. He should stay where he is.

When think means ‘believe’ or ‘have an opinion’, we do not use the continuous:

Ex. I think Mary is Canadian, but I'm not sure. (not: I'm thinking)

What do you think about my plan? (=what is your opinion?)

**B) Assume** can be used in the continuous when it means “**accept as a starting point**”

Ex. I'm assuming that you have time to do a lot of research.

**Assume power/ control of a country or organization** can also be used in the continuous.

Ex. The new government is assuming power at once.

**C) Expect** can be used in the continuous when it means ‘**await**’

Ex. I'm expecting a letter

She is expecting a baby in May.

## D) Is / is being

- **Be is the verb normally used to denote the existence of, or to give information about, a person or thing:**

Tom is a carpenter, Malta is an island, gold is a metal, peter was tall and fair

- **Be is used to express physical or mental condition**

I am cold, he was excited, they will be happy.

- **With certain adjectives, e.g. quite, noisy, good, bad, wise, foolish, it is possible to use the continuous form of be, e.g. tom is being foolish, to imply that the subject is showing this quality at this time.**

Compare: tom is being foolish which means tom is talking or acting foolishly **now**, with tom is foolish which means that he always acts or talks foolishly.

**He's being = he is behaving / he is acting.** Compare:

- I can't understand why he is being so selfish. He isn't usually like that.

(being selfish = behaving selfishly at the moment)

- He never thinks about other people. He is very selfish. (not he is being)

(= he is selfish generally, not only at the moment)

Other adjectives include: annoying, cautious, rash, clever, stupid, difficult, economical, extravagant, formal, funny, generous, mean, helpful, unhelpful, irritating, mysterious, optimistic, pessimistic, polite, selfish, unselfish.

With some of these, e.g. stupid, difficult, funny, polite, the continuous form may imply that the subject is deliberately acting in this way

-You're being stupid may mean you are not trying to understand.

-He is being difficult usually means he is raising unnecessary objections

He is being funny usually means he is only joking. Don't believe him

She is just being polite probably means she is only pretending to admire your car, clothes, house, etc.

We use am/ is/ are being to say how somebody is behaving.

**It is not usually possible in other sentences:**

It's hot today. (not: it is being hot)

Sarah is very tired. (not: is being tired)

## E) Have

When Have is used to mean

**Take** – a meal/ food or drink, a bath / a lesson etc.

we have lunch at one

**Give**- a party, entertain (guests)

they are having a party tomorrow

**Encounter**- difficulties/ trouble

did you have trouble with customs

**Experience, enjoy**, usually with an adjective, e.g. good

I hope you will have a good holiday.

**undergo, or hold, it can be used in the present continuous**

Examples: compare:

We're having lunch now (action of eating)

We have a big kitchen. (state – own)

### Note:

We can use the present continuous with some state verbs (e.g. **attract, like, look, love, sound**) to emphasize that a situation is temporary or for a period of time around the present. Compare:

Examples:

Ella stays with us quite often. The children **love** having her here. *and*

Ella's with us at the moment. The children **are loving** having her here.

Study this example

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was an Austrian musician and composer. He *lived* from 1756 to 1791. He *started* composing at the age of five and *wrote* more than 600 pieces of music. He *was* only 35 years old when he *died*.

*Lived, started, wrote, was, and died* are all past simple.

### A / Form

Affirmative	Question	Negative
I worked	did I work?	I did not work
you worked	did you work?	you did not work
he/she/it worked	did he/she/it work?	he/she/it did not work
We / you / they worked	did we/ you /they work ?	we/you/they did not work

### Notes

- Contracted negatives : *I didn't work, you didn't work* etc.
- Negative questions : *did I not work?* or *didn't I work?* etc.
- Questions and negatives of irregular verbs are made in the same way as those of regular verbs (with *did* + infinitive).

### → Irregular verbs

Irregular verbs have the same form for all persons (I, you, he, she, etc)

I/ he/she/ it/ we/ you/ they *left, went, etc.*

Irregular verbs are irregular in the past simple in the positive only (not in the negative or question form)

*go — went      She **went** home yesterday,*

*sit — sat      I **sat** down,*

*write -- wrote    She **wrote** for hours.*

- Remember to use the infinitive without *ed* for questions and negatives.

### B . Spelling of regular affirmative past tense forms

- Most regular verbs: add - *ed*

*work - worked    stay - stayed    show - showed    wonder - wondered    visit - visited*

*gallop - galloped*

- Verbs ending in -*e*: add -*d* :    *hope - hoped      decide- decided*

- Verbs ending in one stressed vowel + one consonant (except *w* or *y*) double the consonant and add -*ed*

*Shop - shopped      plan - planned      refer – referred      re'gret - regretted*

But (last syllable not stressed):    *'offer - offered      'visit – visited*

- Verbs ending in consonant + -y: change y to i and add -ed: *hurry - hurried cry – cried study - studied*  
But (vowel + -y): *play - played*
- Verbs ending in -c have ck in the past (e.g. *picnic - picnicked*).
- In British English, -l is doubled in the past after one short vowel even if the vowel is not stressed:  
*'travel - travelled.*

### C. Pronunciation of -ed

The regular past ending -ed is pronounced as follows:

- /d/ after vowels and voiced consonants (except /d/): *tried , lived , used , failed*
- / t / after unvoiced consonants (except / t /): *stopped , passed , laughed , watched , worked*
- /ɪd/ after /d/ and / t / : *Ended , started*

### D / Use

We use the simple past to talk about events, actions or situations which happened in the past and are now finished. We always have to say or imply when the action happened, so we often use time references like yesterday, ago, last summer, etc.

#### 1/ completed actions

To talk about events and actions in the past that are now finished. (the complete event)

The time or approximate time that the event took place is stated or is understood from the context.

☞ It may be in the very recent past.

Example : your mother phoned a few minutes ago

☞ Or it may be in the more distant past.

Example : I never learnt to swim as a child.

#### 2/ We can also use the past simple for past states.

Example : I was younger then.

The Romans had a huge empire.

Notes :

A/ with the past simple we often say when the action happened.

Example : I bought some gloves yesterday

Sometimes there is no phrase of time, but we understand a definite time in the past.

Example : I didn't eat any breakfast.

B/ A phrase with « ago » means a finished time. It doesn't include the present.

Example : I saw that film two days ago.

C/ Some typical expressions with the past simple are : *yesterday, this morning/evening, last week/year, a year/month ago, that day/afternoon, the other day/week, at eleven o'clock, on Tuesday, in 1990, just, recently, once, earlier, then, next, after that, etc.*

Some of these expressions are also used with the present perfect.

### 3/ Past situation at a point in time.

Examples : In 1950, there were fewer than 50 million cars in use around the world.  
At the time, I had a poorly-paid job in the local shop.

### 4/ Past habit or regular event .

#### A/ to talk about a regular, repeated or habitual event.

Examples : We went out for a meal every evening on holiday.  
He got up at 7 o'clock every morning to go to work.

#### B/ Or a past habit or situation of some duration.

Examples : He smoked for most of his life.  
She worked there for twenty years.

#### Notes :

There are other ways of expressing repeated actions and habits in the past.

A/ **Used to** : we use « used to » to talk about past habits and states that do not occur now or no longer exist.

Examples : we used to walk to school, but now we get the bus.  
He used to be really shy, but he's much more confident since he started his new job.

❖ Used to is not used to say how often things happened or how long they took.

❖ Be careful not to confuse « used to » with « be/get used to + noun/gerund » which means « be/become accustomed to something » because you have been doing it for a while.

Example : I am used to working nights.

B/ **Would** : would is also used to talk about past habits and repeated actions **BUT** not about past states.

Example : when I was little, I would dress up in my mother's old clothes.

### 5/ The simple past is used in narrative- when we tell stories and when we tell people about past events.

Examples : Once upon a time a princess went into a wood and sat down by a stream...  
I saw John this morning, he told me...

### 6/ With present or future meaning

A past tense doesn't always have a past meaning. In some kinds of sentences we can use verbs like « I had, you went or I wondered » to talk about the present or future.

A/ **after if, unless, supposing, etc.** : after if, unless and words with similar meanings, we often use past forms to refer to the present or future.

Examples/ If I had the money now, I'd buy a car.  
If you caught the 10 o'clock train tomorrow, you could be in Edinburgh by supper-time, unless the train was delayed, of course.  
You look as if you were just about to scream.  
Supposing we didn't go on holiday next year ?



**B/ After it's time, would rather and wish** : after these expressions, too, past forms can have present or future meanings.

- Examples :
- Ten o'clock- it's time you went home.
  - Don't come and see me today- I'd rather you came tomorrow.
  - I wish I had a better memory.

**C/ Distancing in questions, requests, etc.** : we can make questions, requests and offers less direct ( and so more polite) by using past tenses. Common formulae are I wondered, I thought, I hoped, Did you want, etc. Past progressive forms (I was wondering etc.) make sentences even less direct.

- Examples :
- I wondered if you were free this evening.
  - I thought you might like some flowers.
  - Did you want cream with your coffee, sir?

**D/ Past models** : the past model forms could, might, would, and should usually have present or future reference ; they are used as less direct, « distanced » forms of can.

- Examples :
- Could you help me for a moment ?
  - Would you come this way, please?

## A / Form

The past continuous tense is formed by *the past tense of the verb to be + the present participle*:

Affirmative	Negative	Interrogative
I was working	I was not working	was I working?
you were working	you were not working	were you working?
he/she/it was working	he/she/it was not working	was he/she/it working?
we were working	we were not working	were we working?
you were working	you were not working	were you working?
they were working	they were not working	were they working?

- **Short answers**      Yes, I/ he/ she / it was.                      No, I/ he/ she / it wasn't.  
                                   Yes, you/ we / they were.                      No, you/ we / they weren't.
- **Negative contractions:** *I wasn't working, you weren't working* etc.
- **Negative interrogative:** *was he not/wasn't he working?* etc.

## B / Use

**1/ To talk about an action, an event or a situation in progress (going on) in the past ; that is an action at some point between its beginning and end.**

I was doing something = I was in the middle of doing something at a certain time. The action or situation had already started before this time, but had not finished.

I started doing      I was doing      I finished doing

↓  
now

*Examples :*    *We were having breakfast at 7.30.    I didn't hear the doorbell. I was listening to music.*

Note: we often use “all” to emphasize **continuity** ( all day, all summer, all night, all evening, etc.); that is to show and stress that an action or event was in progress throughout this time.

*It was raining all night.                      I was watching TV all evening.*

**2/ Used without a time expression, the past continuous can indicate gradual development:**

*It was getting darker.                      The wind was rising.*

**3/ We often use the past progressive together with the simple past tense to say that something happened in the middle of something else.**

- **The past continuous refers to a longer, background action or situation;**
- **The simple past refers to the shorter, complete action or event that happened in the middle of the longer one, or that interrupted it.**

*Examples :*    *Matt phoned while we were having dinner.*  
                                   *We were having a walk by the river when it started raining.*

Note : Conjunctions used to introduce long actions are: **when, as, just as** and **while**. BUT the shorter actions can be introduced by “**when**”. E.g. *We were having supper when the phone rang.*

#### **4/ To talk about actions in progress at the same time in the past. ( both actions went on during the same period of time)**

Examples : *While I was reading, Ann was playing the piano.*

*BUT/ When one complete action followed another (when one thing happened after another), we use the past simple for both.*

Examples: *Tim got up when the doorbell rang.*

Compare: *A. When Karen arrived, we were having dinner. (we had already started before she arrived.*

*B. When Karen arrived, we had dinner. (Karen arrived ,and then we had dinner)*

#### **5/ past States and situations**

A) For a past state we normally use the past simple.

Examples : *My grandmother loved this house. I didn't know what to do.*

B) With temporary states or situations we can sometimes use the past continuous.

Examples: *I didn't feel/ wasn't feeling very well.*

*It happened while I was living in London last year.*

#### **6/ Repeated actions**

**The simple past is usually used for talking about repeated or habitual past actions. However, The past continuous is possible when repeated actions are temporary, only for a period , or if the repeated actions form a background for the main actions.**

Examples: *My car was off the road. I was travelling to work by bus that week.*

*At the time when it happened, I was seeing a lot of Belinda, and I was also going to the opera a lot.*

#### **7/We can use the past continuous for a past arrangement.**

Example: *I was in my way to the pub. I was meeting James there.*

*(I had arranged to meet him there)*

**8/ The past progressive can be used with “always, continually” and similar words to talk about things that happened repeatedly and unexpectedly, or in an unplanned way.**

Examples: *I didn't like him. He was always borrowing money.*

*When I worked here, I was always making mistakes.*

*Do you remember Mr. Adams? He was always quoting Shakespeare.*

#### **9/ Polite enquiries.**

Example: *I was wondering if you wanted to come to the cinema.*

*I was wondering if you could give me a lift.*

**10/ To talk about anticipated events (events intended to take place) that did not happen.**

Examples: *they were going to Wales on holiday that summer, but there was a train strike and they had to cancel their trip.*

*I was going to phone you, but I forgot.*

*I was thinking of going to Italy this year, but I haven't decided.*

**11/ To describe the background and set the scene for a narrative in the past.**

**Example:** *The wind was blowing and the rain was beating down. John Snell was standing at the bus stop shivering. He was trying to imagine being at home sitting by a warm fire. Finally he saw the headlights of the bus approaching from the distance.*

## The simple present perfect tense

**A/ Form** : The present perfect tense is formed with *the present tense of have + the past participle*:

*I have worked* etc.

The past participle in regular verbs has exactly the same form as the simple past, i.e. *loved, walked* etc.

In irregular verbs, the past participles vary.

The negative is formed by adding not to the auxiliary.

The interrogative is formed by inverting the auxiliary and subject.

Affirmative	Question	Negative
	Yes/ No questions:	
<b>I have worked</b>	Have I worked	I have not worked
<b>He/ she/ it has worked</b>	Has he/she/it worked	He/ she/it has not worked
<b>You/ we/ they have worked</b>	Have you/we/they worked	You/ we/ they have not worked.
	WH questions:	Negative interrogative: <i>has he not worked?</i>
	What have I/you/we/they prepared?	etc.
	What has he/she/it prepared?	
	Where have you been?	
	What has he done?	

**Contractions:** *have/has* and *have not/has not* can be contracted.

I've, you've, he's, she's, it's, you've, we've, they've.

I haven't, he/she/it hasn't, you haven't, we haven't, they haven't.

**Alternative negative contractions (chiefly used in perfect tenses)**

**have not** and **has not** contract to **haven't** and **hasn't**, but in perfect tenses **'ve not** and **'s not** are also possible:

*We haven't seen him / We've not seen him.*

*He hasn't / He 's not come yet.*

**Negative interrogative contractions:** *have I not/haven't I? have you not/haven't you? has he not/ hasn't he? etc.*

*Haven't you worked, hasn't he worked? etc.*

The contracted forms are often almost inaudible in colloquial speech.

## B/ Use

This tense may be said to be a sort of mixture of present and past. It always implies a strong connection with the present and is chiefly used in conversations, letters, newspapers and television and radio reports.

If we say that something has happened, we are thinking of the past and the present at the same time. We could often change a simple present perfect sentence into a present sentence with a similar meaning.

Examples: I've broken my leg---my leg is broken now. Mary has had a baby---Mary now has a baby.

Utopia has invaded Fantasia---Utopia is at war with Fantasia. Our dog has died---our dog is dead.

*We do not use the present perfect if we are not thinking principally about the present.*

Compare: We've learnt enough to pass the exam. (the exam is still to come)

We learnt enough to pass the exam. (the exam is over)

Look what John's given me! (focus on the gift)

Who gave you that? (focus on the past action of giving)

***1/ We often use the present perfect to talk about finished actions when we are thinking of their present consequences; the results that they have now.***

Examples:      Somebody has shot the manager. (The manager is dead now)  
                  Where's your key?      I don't know. I've lost it. (I haven't got it now)  
                  He told me his name but I've forgotten it. (I can't remember it now)  
                  Is Sally here?      No, she's gone out. (She is out now)

***2/ We often use the present perfect to give new information or to announce a recent happening.***

Examples:      The road is closed. There has been an accident.  
                  (from the news) the police have arrested two men in connection with the robbery.  
                  And here are the main points of the news again. The pound has fallen against the dollar. The  
                  Prime Minister has said that the government's economic policies are working. The number  
                  of unemployed has reached five millions...

*The present perfect is not often used to talk about a finished event, if we say when it happened.*

Compare:      there has been an explosion at Edinburgh castle.  
                  There was an explosion at Edinburgh castle last night. (not: there has been... last night)

*Note that after using the present perfect to announce a piece of news, we usually change to simple or progressive tenses to give the details.*

Examples:      There has been a plane crash near Bristol. Witnesses say that there was an explosion as the  
                  aircraft was taking off...

***3/ Indefinite events, which happened at an unknown time in the past (indefinite past). No definite time is given. The past is indefinite because the time it happened is not important, or because we do not know when it happened***

Example:      Jim has had three car accidents.      I've been to Paris.  
                  They have met my parents.      Elina has arrived.

***4/ Finished actions: time up to now (unfinished time period)***

***We often use the simple present perfect for past events when we are thinking of a period of time continuing up to the present-*** for example when we **use indefinite time adverbs** that mean "at some/ any time up to now" like: ever, before, never, yet, already.

Examples:      Have you ever seen a ghost?      You've only ever called me "darling" once.  
                  I'm sure we've met before.      She's never apologized for anything in her life.  
                  "Has Ben come yet?"      "yes, and he's already started to make trouble."  
                  I haven't seen Peter since Christmas.      We haven't had a holiday for ages.

Other examples: with today, this week, this morning, etc.

I've read two books this week.      I've seen him twice today.

***5/ When we are describing actions, states or situations that have started in the past and still continue.***

Examples:      I've studied hard for years. (not: I study hard for years)  
                  We've known each other since 1960. (not: We know each other since 1960).  
                  I've never liked you.  
                  How long have you been a doctor? (not: how long are you a doctor?)  
                  We've always lived here.

***6/ When we are describing repeated actions that have continued from some time in the past until now.***

Examples: We've seen three movies this week.  
I've been to every one of their concerts since they started playing together.  
I've written six letters since lunchtime.

**7/ With state verbs, a state which lasts up to the present. e.g. be, believe, have, know, think, like, etc.**

Example: I've disliked bananas since I was a child.  
I have known him for a long time.  
I have never believed their theories.  
I've lived here for the past ten years.

**think and wonder :**

Examples: I have sometimes thought that I should have emigrated.  
I have often wondered why he didn't marry her.

**8/ To talk about experience; that is things that have happened at some times in our lives.**

Examples: We have been to Athens before. She has met a lot of famous people.  
She has read all of Graham Greene's novels. I've heard this music before.

**9/ When we talk about our first, second, etc. experience of something. (after the pattern it/ this/ that is/will be the first time...)**

Examples: This is the worst book I have ever read.  
This is the easiest job I have ever had.

*We can use this construction, without ever. with the first, the second etc. and the only:*

It/This is the first time I have seen a mounted band.  
It is only the second time he has been in a canoe.  
This is the only book he has written.  
It won't be the first time she has voted against the government in her long career. (talking about a future event)

**10/ When we use the superlative (describing personal experience with superlatives)**

Example: Maria is the most beautiful girl I've ever seen She is the most intelligent person I've met.

**11/ The present perfect is often used to stress the idea of completion or achievement.**

Examples: At last! I've finished!  
Have you done all the housework?

**12/ We often use the present perfect with the past participle been. We use "been" like the verb to go and often say been to.**

I went to Paris last year. I've been to Paris (not: I've gone to Paris)

Compare these two sentences: Ann is on holiday. She's gone to Canada (= she is there now or in her way there)  
Jane is back home now. She's been to Canada (but, she has now come back)

**13/ Expressions of finished time: present perfect not used**

We do not often use the present perfect with expressions that refer to a completely finished period of time like: yesterday, last week, then, when, three years ago, in 1970. This is because the present perfect focuses on the present, and time expressions like these focus on the past, so they contradict each other.

Examples: I saw Lucy yesterday. (not: I've seen Lucy yesterday)  
Tom was ill last week. (not: Tom has been ill last week)

**14/ We do not use the present perfect to ask about time.**

When did you go there? NOT When have you been there?

## Time Expressions with present perfect

1/ We can use the present perfect with “just, already and yet”

a) The present perfect used with “just” (= a short time ago) for a recently completed action

Examples: He has just gone out = He went out a few minutes ago.

Are you hungry? No, I've just had lunch.

This is a special use of this tense, “just” must be placed between the auxiliary and the main verb. This combination is used chiefly in the affirmative, though the interrogative form is possible:

Example: Has he just gone out?

It is not normally used in the negative.

b) We use “already” to say that something happened sooner than expected.

Examples: Don't forget to post the letter, will you? I've already posted it.

What time is Mark leaving? He's already gone.

c) Yet = “until now” and shows that the speaker is expecting something to happen. Use “yet” only in questions and negative sentences.

Examples: Has it stopped raining yet?

I've written the letter but I haven't posted it yet.

2 / lately, recently used with the present perfect also indicate an incomplete period of time.

In the sentences: Has he been here lately/recently? and He hasn't been here lately/recently, **lately/recently** means 'at any time during the last week/month etc. and in: He has been here recently, **recently** means 'at some undefined time during the last week/month etc.'

**lately** is less usual with the affirmative, except for actions covering periods of time:

There have been some changes lately/recently.

He's had a lot of bad luck lately/recently.

**recently**, used with a simple past tense, means 'a short time ago':

He left recently = He left a short time ago.

3/ The present perfect can be used similarly with **ever, never, always, occasionally, often, several times etc. and since + a point in time, since + clause, or since:**

• ANN: Have you **ever** fallen off a horse?

TOM: Yes, I've fallen off quite **often/occasionally**.

But if Tom's riding days are over, we would have:

ANN: Did you ever fall off a horse? (past tense)

TOM: Yes. I did **occasionally/frequently**.

• I haven't seen him **since** November.

We had a letter last week. We haven't heard **since**.

I've **since** changed my mind = I've changed my mind since then-

Has he written **since** he left home?

**The present perfect can be used here for habitual actions:**

They've **always** answered my letters.

I've **never** been late for work.

Sometimes these appear to be **continual rather than repeated action:**

**Since** my accident I have written with my left hand.

I've worn glasses **since** my childhood.



We can then use *for + a period of time* as an alternative to *since + a point in time*:

*I've used my left hand for a month now.*

*I've worn glasses for ten years.*

**4/ The present perfect used for actions occurring in an incomplete period indicated by "today or this morning /afternoon/evening/week/month/year/century etc."**

Time expressions that refer to the present such as this morning, / week/ month and today can be used with either past simple or present perfect verbs.

- If we think of this morning(etc.) as a past, completed period, then we use the past simple;
- If we think of this morning (etc.) as a time period which includes the present moment , then we use the present perfect.

Compare: I didn't shave this morning. (= this morning is over and I didn't shave) and:

I haven't shaved this morning. (= it is still the morning and I might shave later)

*The present perfect used with an incomplete period of time implies that the action happened or didn't happen at some undefined time during this period:*

*Have you seen him today? (at any time today)*

*Yes, I have/ Yes, I've seen him today. (at some time during the day)*

But if we know that an action usually happens at a certain time or in a certain part of our incomplete period we use the simple past tense.

If my alarm clock normally goes off at six, I might say at breakfast: *My alarm clock didn't go off this morning.*

Imagine that the postman normally comes between nine and ten. From nine till ten we will say:

*Has the postman come yet/this morning?*

But after this nine to ten period we will say: *Did the postman come this morning?*

*We use the past tense here because we are thinking about a complete period of time even though we do not mention it.*

**5/ The present perfect used for an action which lasts throughout an incomplete period**

**Time expressions include *for, since, all day/night/week, all my etc. life, all the time, always, lately, never, recently.***

The action usually begins in the past and continues past the time of speaking in the present

*Examples:*

*He has been in the army for two years. (He is still in the army.)*      *He has always worked for us. (He still works for us)*

*I have smoked since I left school. (I still smoke.)*      *We have waited all day. (We are still waiting.)*

*He has lived here all his life. (He still lives here.)*

Compare the above sentences with:

*He was in the army for two years. (He is not in the army now.)*

*I smoked for six months. (and then stopped smoking)*

*He lived here all his life. (Presumably he is now dead.)*

In each of the last three examples we are dealing with a completed period of time, so the simple past tense is used.

Sometimes, however, the action finishes at the time of speaking:

*ANN (on meeting someone): I haven't seen you for ages? (but I see you now)*

*This room hasn't been cleaned for months, (but we are cleaning it now)*

*It has been very cold lately but it's just beginning to get warmer.*

## 6/ The present perfect used with *for* and *since*

A) *for* is used with a period of time: *for six days, for a long time.*

- **for** used with the simple past tense denotes a terminated period of time:  
*We lived there for ten years.* (but we don't live there now)
- **for** used with the present perfect denotes a period of time extending into the present:  
*We have lived in London for ten years.* (and still live there)
- **for** can sometimes be omitted, especially after *be*, *live* and *wait*.  
*We've been here an hour/two days.*
- **for** (of time) is not used before expressions beginning with *all*:  
*They've worked all night.*

B) *since* is used with a point in time and means '*from that point to the time of speaking*'. It is used with a perfect tense. (we do not use *since* with the past simple)

*She has been here since six o'clock.* (and is still here)

*We've been friends since our schooldays.*

- *since* + clause is also possible:  
*I've worked here since I left school*
- *it is* + period + *since* + past or perfect tense

We can say:

*It is three years since I (last) saw Bill* or *It is three years since I have seen Bill.*

*I last saw Bill three years ago* or *I haven't seen Bill for three years.*

*It is two months since Tom (last) smoked a cigarette* or *It is two months since Tom has smoked a cigarette.*

*He last smoked a cigarette two months ago* or *He hasn't smoked a cigarette for two months.*

- We can use the **it is ... since** construction without the adverb *last*:

*It is two years since he left the country.*

This, however, is replaceable only by:

*He left the country two years ago.*

We could not use a negative present perfect here as in the sentence about Bill above. *He hasn't been (living) in this country/or the last two years* is possible but isn't an exact equivalent of *He left two years ago*.

This construction can be used in the past:

*He invited me to go riding with him. But it was two years since I had ridden a horse.* (I hadn't ridden a horse for two years previous to the invitation so I wasn't sure that I would enjoy it.)

## 7/ With time clauses introduced by *after*, *when*, *until*, *as soon as*, *once*, *by the time* and the time expressions *the minute/second/ moment* the past simple refers to past, completed events and the present perfect refers to future events.

Compare these examples:

*After she left hospital (past), she had a long holiday. And*

*After Dominic has left school (future), he will be spending six months in India.*

*The minute I got the news about Sue (past), I telephoned my parents. And*

*I'll contact you the minute I've got my exam results. (future)*

## Simple past and present perfect: summary

### present perfect

#### Unfinished actions

The present perfect is used for unfinished actions continuing up to now.

e.g. I've known Jane since 2005.

#### Connection with the present

When we use the present perfect, it suggests some kind of connection between what happened in the past, and the present time (we think about past and present together)

e.g. I've broken my glasses. (my glasses are broken)

#### Indefinite events

When we talk about something that happened in the past, but we don't specify precisely when it happened (perhaps we don't know, or it is not important to say when it happened), we use the present perfect.

e.g. A French yachtsman has broken the record for sailing round the world single-handed.

I have complained about the traffic before.

#### States

We use the present perfect to talk about a state that existed in the past and still exists now.

e.g. I have known him most of my working life. (I am still working)

We have belonged to the tennis club since we moved here. (We still belong to it)

#### Time words

We often use the present perfect with words for time up to now.

e.g. I've never seen a fox.

I've drunk three cups of coffee today.

#### News

We announce a piece of news with the present perfect

e.g. Bill has had an accident.

#### How long?

If we are interested in how long it has been going on, we use the present perfect.

e.g. I've had the pains for three weeks now.

How long have you been in Britain?

#### repeated actions or events

We often use the present perfect to say that an action or event has been repeated a number of times up to now. The action or event might happen again.

e.g. Timson has made 13 films and I think her latest is the best.

### Simple past

#### Finished actions

The simple past is used for completed/ finished actions.

e.g. my grandfather worked for a newspaper.

#### No connection with the present

The simple past does not suggest a connection with the present.

e.g. Anna went to London. (we don't know whether Anna is in London or not)

#### Events which happened at definite times

When we want to indicate that something happened at a specific time in the past, we use the past simple. We can either say when it happened, using a time adverb, or assume that the hearer already knows when it happened or can understand this from the context.

e.g. She arrived at Kennedy Airport at 2 o'clock this morning.

Jim decided to continue the course, even though it was proving very difficult.

We use the past simple if the state no longer exists.

e.g. I knew him when we were both working in Rome.

We belonged to the tennis club in the village we used to live in.

We use the simple past with words for a finished time, like yesterday, in 2002, ago, last week, etc.

e.g. I saw Ann yesterday.

Bill phoned three days ago.

#### Details

we use the simple past for the details of time and place.

e.g. He fell off his bicycle when he was going to work.

#### When?

If we are interested in when a present situation began, we use the past simple.

e.g. I started to get the pains three weeks ago.

When did you arrive in Britain?

If we use the past simple, it suggests that it is finished and won't happen again

e.g. Timson made 13 films before she was tragically killed in a car accident.

Study this example:

Is it raining? “No, but the ground is wet”. It **has been raining**.

*Have / has been – ing* is the *present perfect continuous*.

### A / Form

This tense is formed by *the present perfect of the verb “to be” + the present participle*

#### Positive statements

I	Have been	Working Playing Studying Reading Etc.
you		
we they		
he she it	Has been	

#### Negative statements

I	Have not (haven't) been	Working Playing Studying Reading Etc.
You		
We They		
He She It	Has not (hasn't) been	

#### Questions

Has  
been

working?

Have I/ you/ we / they been working?

#### Negative interrogative sentences

Has he/ she / it not been working?

Hasn't he/she/it been working?

Have I/ you/ we / they not been working?

Haven't I/you/we/ they been working?

### B / Use

**1/ we use the present perfect continuous to talk about actions, states, situations or activities which started in the past and are still going on (still continue, have been in progress for a period of time)**

Examples: I've been waiting for an hour and he still hasn't turned up.  
It has been raining all week.

**The situation or activity may still be going on (continuing), or it may have recently stopped (has just stopped). There is a connection with now.**

**I have been doing something = I started doing something in the past and I'm still doing it (or have just stopped)**

Examples: you are out of breath. Have you been running? (you are out of breath now)

Paul is very tired. He has been working very hard. (he is tired now)

Compare: A. We have been discussing the proposals for a number of years (=still going on)

B. Your eyes are red. Have you been crying? (recently stopped)

**2/ we often use the present perfect progressive to say how we have been filling our time up to now.**

Examples: sorry I haven't written. I have been travelling.

“you look tired” “yes, I have been working in the garden”.

“what have you been doing with yourself since I last saw you?” “travelling”.

**3/ the present perfect continuous can be used to talk about actions repeated over a period of time (up to now)**

Examples: Debbie is a very good tennis player. She's been playing since she was eight.

Every morning they meet in the same café. They've been going there for years.

**4/ we also use the present perfect continuous when we talk about duration; to ask or to say (to emphasize) how long an action has been going on for (has been in progress).**

Examples: it is raining now. It began raining two hours ago and it is still raining.

Q. how long has it been raining?

A. It has been raining for two hours.

We often use the present perfect continuous in this way, especially with how long, for..., and since... ;The activity is still happening or has just stopped.

Examples: How long have you been learning English?

Where have you been? I have been looking for you for the last half hour.

I have been painting the bathroom all morning.

I've been watching TV since two o'clock.

**5/ To suggest that an activity is temporary.**

Example: I've been learning to drive, but I'm going to give up.

**6/ To suggest that an activity is not complete.**

Example: I have been reading that new Stephen King novel, but I haven't finished it yet.

**7/ With "all" (all day, all night, all morning, etc.) phrases which emphasize the duration of the activity.**

Examples: It has been raining all night.

She has been working all day.

**8/ It's also used With "lately/recently". These both mean "in the last few days or weeks".**

Examples: I haven't been feeling very well recently.

What have you been doing lately?

## The simple present perfect and the present perfect progressive compared

### 1.

Ann's clothes are covered in paint. She **has been painting** the ceiling.  
We are interested in **the activity**. It doesn't matter whether something has been finished or not.  
**In this example, the activity (painting the ceiling) has not been finished**

The ceiling was white. Now, it is blue. She **has painted** the ceiling.  
Here, the important thing is that **something has been finished**. "has painted" is a **completed action**- we are interested in **the result of the activity (the painted ceiling)**, not in the activity itself.

- The **present perfect simple** is used when **the action is complete and the final achievement (the result) is important**. (The present perfect simple focuses on the effect of the activity or event, or the fact that something has been achieved).

Example: I've run six kilometers.

- The **present perfect progressive** is used when **the activity is important**. We are interested in **how someone has been spending time**, and the achievement is not important. (the present perfect continuous focuses on the activity or event which may or may not be finished)

Example: I've been running.

### 2.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ○ <b>How long</b> have you <b>been reading</b> that book?                           | ○ <b>How many</b> pages of that book <b>have you read</b> ?   |
| ○ Mary is still writing letters. She's <b>been writing</b> letters <b>all day</b> . | ○ Mary <b>has written</b> ten letters today.                  |
| ○ They <b>have been playing</b> tennis <b>since two o'clock</b> .                   | ○ They've <b>played</b> tennis <b>three times this week</b> . |

- We use **the present perfect continuous** to ask or say "**how long**" (for an activity that is still happening).
- We use **the simple present perfect** to ask or say "**how much, how many, how many times, or how often**" (completed actions).

### 3.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ○ I've <b>been collecting</b> stamps since I was a child. | ○ I've <b>collected stamps</b> since I was a child. |
|---|---|

- We can use either the present perfect continuous or the present perfect to talk about activities or events that are repeated again and again until now. **So, both sentences are correct, but the continuous form is more usual here.**
  - *However*, if we mention the number of times the activity or event was repeated, we use the present perfect rather than the continuous. E.g. **He has played for the national team in 65 matches so far.**
4. We use the **present perfect progressive** in place of the **simple present perfect** when we want to **emphasize that something has been in progress throughout a period**.

Instead of saying: *I've typed all day*. We can say, for emphasis: *I've been typing all day*.

Depending on the context, this may mean: I'm still typing or I've just recently stopped.

### 5.

- When we talk about more temporary actions and situations (over a short time) we can use both forms **but** the continuous is more usual
- When we talk about long-lasting or permanent (unchanging) situations, or when we want to emphasize that we are talking about the whole of a period of time until the present we use the **simple present perfect** (especially if we use "always" e.g. I've always admired Chester's work.)

Compare: A/ I've been living in Sally's flat for the last month.

B/ My parents have lived in Bristol all their lives.

A/ That man has been standing on the corner all day.

B/ For 900 years, the castle has stood on the hill above the village.

6. We can use both forms with “lately” and “recently”.

Examples: I have been working really hard lately. (the activity of working is important)  
I've done a lot of work lately. (the completion of the work is important)

7. We use the present perfect (not the continuous) for a state up to the present.

Example: she has been in a wheelchair for 3 years.

8. Some verbs (e.g. know, like, believe, be, have (meaning “posses”, etc.) are not normally used in the continuous.

Examples: how long have you known Jane?  
I've had a pain in my stomach since I got up this morning.  
How long have you been in England?

9. We can normally use either the continuous or the simple form with “live” and “work”.

Examples: John has been living/ has lived in London for a long time.  
How long have you been working/ have you worked here?

10. Some verbs like learn, lie, rain, sit, sleep, stand, study and wait naturally suggest continuity and we often use them with “since” and “for”.

We can use them in the simple present perfect tense.

Example: I've waited here for two hours.

But we most often use them in the progressive.

Example: I've been waiting here for two hours.

## Notes

1. Do not use the simple present (I do) or the present continuous (I'm doing) to say how long something has been happening.

Examples: I've been waiting here for an hour. (not: I'm waiting)  
How long have you known John? (not: do you know)

2. When we talk about situations or actions that went on over a period of time but finished at a particular point in time before now, we do not use the present perfect continuous.

Examples: I was reading until midnight last night. (not: ~~I've been reading~~)  
She had been living in Spain before her family moved to Brazil. (not: ~~she's been living~~)  
He put off the decision for as long as possible, but eventually he made up his mind and bought the car. (not: ~~he has been putting~~)

3. When we want to emphasize that a situation has changed over a period of time up to now, and may continue to change we prefer the present perfect continuous to the present perfect.

Examples: The pollution problem has been getting worse over the last decade.  
Sales have been increasing for some time.

However, if we talk about a specific change over a period of time which ends now- particularly to focus on the result of this change, we use the present perfect.

Examples: Prices have increased by 7% (in a period up to now)  
The population has grown from 35 million in 1950 to 40 million today.

Study this example

Sarah went to a party last week. Paul went to the party too but they didn't see each other. Paul went home at 10.30 and Sarah arrived at 11 o'clock. So: *When Sarah arrived at the party, Paul wasn't there. He **had gone** home.*

**Had gone** is the *past perfect (simple)*

**A / Form**

The past perfect is formed with the auxiliary "**had**" and the past participle.

In speech and informal writing "had" is contracted to "'d".

Negatives are formed with "not" and contractions are used (hadn't).

Questions are formed by inverting the subject and "had".

**Affirmative**

I / you/ we / they / he / she / it had ('d) left, worked, played, etc. (past participle)

**Negative**

I / you/ we / they / he / she / it had not (hadn't) left, worked, played, etc. (past participle)

**Questions**

	Had	I / you/ we / they / he / she / it	worked, played, etc. (past participle)?
What	had	I / you/ we / they / he / she / it	found?

**Short answers**

Yes	I / you/ we / they / he / she / it	had.
No	I / you/ we / they / he / she / it	hadn't.

**Negative interrogative**

Had	I / you/ we / they / he / she / it	not	left, worked, played, etc. (past participle)?
Hadn't	I / you/ we / they / he / she / it		left, worked, played, etc. (past participle)?

**B / Use**

**1/ We use the past perfect when we are already talking about the past, and we want to go back to an earlier past time (to refer to events in the past which happened before other events in the past, usually when there is no time expression to make this clear).**

In other words: **sometimes we talk about something that happened in the past (for example: Sarah arrived at the party). This is the starting point of the story. Then, if we want to talk about things that happened before this time, we use the past perfect.**

Examples: When Sarah arrived at the party, Paul had already gone home.

Karen didn't want to come to the cinema with us because she had already seen the film.

The man sitting next to me on the plane was very nervous. He hadn't flown before/ he had never flown before.

**2/ the past perfect is used (when absolutely necessary) to show clearly that one event in the past happened before another. We use the past perfect to describe the first of two or more events in the past (the earlier event).**

Examples: I had spoken to Mr. Johnson before the meeting began.

I realized that we had met before. By the time I got to the station, the train had left.

**Note:** it may not be necessary to use the past perfect if we use time conjunctions such as "before" or "after" to make the time clear. We can use the past simple for both actions.

Examples: Sue left / had left her office before we arrived. ( both forms possible)

We arrived at Sue's office after she left/ had left. ( both forms possible)

**After** he (had) finished his exams he went to Paris for a month.



She didn't feel the same **after** her dog (had) died.

**As soon as** I (had) put the phone down it rang again.

**Note:** we often introduce the past perfect with **time expressions** like: **when, once, meanwhile, after, as soon as, by the time that, the moment, already, ever, never, before**, etc.

### 3/ With verbs of thinking

With **forgot, remembered, realized, knew, understood, was/were sure** we use the past perfect simple to describe the past events that happened before the moment we forgot, remembered or realized something.

Examples: David knew he'd seen her somewhere before, but he couldn't remember where.  
When I got on the bus, I realized that I had left my wallet at home.  
Ellen was sure they hadn't received the invoice, but she checked one more time.  
I thought we had already chosen the name for the new product!

### 4/ The past perfect is used as the equivalent of the present perfect.

Examples: Ann and Michael have just got married.  
It was June 1991. Ann and Michael had just got married.  
Jeremy's 21 now and he's been in a wheelchair since he was 10.  
Jeremy was 21 and he had been in a wheelchair since he was 10.

➤ Unlike the present perfect, the past perfect can be used with a specific time reference.

Example: He had left his case on the 4.40 train.

➤ **The past perfect can be used -similarly - with "since, for, always, etc." for an action which began before the past time we are talking about and:**

- **Was still continuing at that time:**

Example : Bill was in uniform when I met him. He had been a soldier for ten years/since he was 17, and planned to stay in the army till he was thirty.

- **Stopped at that time or just before it:**

Example: Peter who had waited for an hour/ since ten o'clock was very angry with his sister when she eventually turned up.

### 5/ Unrealized hopes and wishes; things that did not happen

The past perfect can be used to express an unrealized hope, wish, etc.

Examples: I had hoped we would be able to leave tomorrow, but it's beginning to look difficult.  
He had intended to make a cake, but he ran out of time.

➤ **After "if, if only, wish, would rather" the past perfect can be used to talk about past events that did not happen.**

Examples: If I had known you were at home, I would have called you.  
I wish you had told me the truth.  
If only they had stayed at home.  
I'd rather she had asked me before borrowing the car.

### 6/ In reported speech

A. Present perfect tenses in direct speech become past perfect tenses in indirect speech provided the introductory verb is in the past tense.

Examples: He said: "I have been in England for ten years".  
He said that he had been in England for ten years.

B. Simple past tenses in direct speech usually change similarly.

Examples: He said: "I knew her well" He said that he had known her well.

Study this example situation:

Yesterday morning I got up and looked out of the window. The sun was shining but the ground was very wet. It **had been raining**.

It was *not* raining when I looked out of the window; the sun was shining. But it had been raining before. That's why the ground was wet.

**Had been -ing** is the *past perfect continuous*.

### A / Form

This tense is formed with **had been + the present participle**. It is therefore the same for all persons:

#### Affirmative

I/ you/ we / they / he /she / it     **had been ('d been) waiting.**

#### Negative

I/ you/ we / they / he /she / it     **had not been (hadn't been) waiting.**

#### Questions

**Had I/ you/ we / they / he /she / it been waiting?**  
**What had I/ you/ we / they / he /she / it been doing?**

#### Short answers

**Yes,** I/ you/ we / they / he /she / it **had.**  
**No,** I/ you/ we / they / he /she / it **hadn't.**

#### Negative interrogative

**Had I/ you/ we / they / he /she / it not been waiting?**  
**Hadn't I/ you/ we / they / he /she / it been waiting?**

### B/ Use

The past perfect continuous is the equivalent (past form) of the present perfect continuous. The present perfect continuous describes an activity looking back from the present and the past perfect continuous describes an activity looking back from the past.

#### **Use the past perfect continuous**

**1/ to talk about longer actions or situations which had continued (actions or situations that were in progress) up to a certain point in the past, or shortly before it.**

Examples:     At that time we had been living in the caravan for about six months.  
                   It was 1 o'clock and the dog from next door had been barking for two hours.

**2/ In a past tense narrative, to describe a continuing action in a period of time before something else happened.**

Examples:     Anna **returned** from France, where she **had been studying** French.  
                   When I found Mary, I could see that she had been crying.

**You can say that something had been happening for a period of time before something else happened.**

Examples:     Our game of tennis was interrupted. We had been playing for about half an hour when it started to rain very heavily.  
                   Ken gave up smoking two years ago. He had been smoking for 30 years.

**3/ To explain a past situation, by describing the events happening before.**

Examples:     Both boys were wet and muddy. They had been playing football in the rain.  
                   When the boys came into the house, their clothes were dirty, their hair was untidy and one of them had a black eye. They'd been fighting

**4/ to talk about a repeated action which had been happening again and again up to a past moment or stopped just before it.**

Examples: He had been trying to get her on the phone.  
Ha had been phoning every night for a month.

**5/ In reported speech**

Examples: "it's been raining here for days", he said  
He said that it had been raining there for days.

**6/ Drawing conclusions.**

Example: Her eyes were red. It was clear she had been crying.

**The simple past perfect and past perfect progressive: differences**

- ❖ Progressive tenses are often used to talk about more temporary actions and situations; when we talk about longer-lasting or permanent situations we prefer simple tenses (though both forms are often possible in the same situation, with a slight difference of emphasis). Compare:  
My legs were stiff because I had been standing still for a long time.  
They lived in a castle which had stood on a hill above the village for 800 years.
- ❖ Progressive forms generally emphasize the continuation of an activity; we use simple tenses to emphasize the idea of completion. Compare:  
A/ I had been reading science fiction, and my mind was full of strange images.  
B/ I had read all my magazines, and was beginning to get bored.  
A/ By six o'clock he had repaired the engine (this job had been completed)  
B/ He had been repairing the engine (tells us how he had spent the previous hour/half hour etc. it doesn't tell us whether or not the job was completed)
- ❖ Some verbs (for example know and like) are not normally used in the continuous:  
We were good friends. We had known each other for years (not: ~~had been knowing~~)
- ❖ Another difference is that an action in the past perfect continuous continues up to, or beyond, the time of speaking in the past. An action in the past perfect may occur shortly before the time of speaking, but there could be quite a long interval between them:  
*He had been painting the door.* (The paint was probably still wet.)  
But  
*He had painted the door.* (Perhaps recently, perhaps some time ago.)

**Compare had been doing and was doing (past continuous)**

- ❖ It wasn't raining when we went out. The sun was shining. But it had been raining, so the ground was wet.
- ❖ Ann was sitting in an armchair watching television. She was tired because she'd been working very hard.