*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 Negative statements***

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

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

**Questions**

Has he/ she / it 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**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 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**.

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

* 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 been collecting stamps since I was a child. | * I’ve collected stamps 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)

1. 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~~)

1. 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.