

12 The present perfect continuous

The present perfect continuous is used to talk about a continuing activity in the past that still has an effect on the present moment. It usually refers to the recent past.

See also:

Past simple 7 Present perfect simple 11
Infinitives and participles 51

12.1 THE PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS

The present perfect continuous describes an activity that took place over a period of time in the recent past. The activity might just have stopped or might still be happening.

PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS

I have been painting the house all day. I'm exhausted!

The past activity often affects the present moment.



FURTHER EXAMPLES

"I have" can be shortened to "I've."

I've been cooking this evening.
Now I have to do the dishes.



"He has" can be shortened to "He's."

He's been waiting for the bus for an hour.
He is going to be late for work.



HOW TO FORM

SUBJECT

"HAS / HAVE"

"BEEN"

VERB + "-ING"

OBJECT

I

have

been

painting

the house.

Use "have" or "has,"
depending on the subject.

"Been" stays the
same for all subjects.

"-ing" is added to
the main verb.

12.2 THE PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS AND THE PRESENT PERFECT SIMPLE

The present perfect continuous is used to show that an activity in the past was in progress. It is possible that the activity is still taking place.

PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS

I've been fixing my car. I'm covered in oil.



The present perfect simple is used to show that an activity in the past is finished.

PRESENT PERFECT SIMPLE

I've fixed my car. Now I can drive to work again.



FURTHER EXAMPLES

I've been cooking dinner.
It will be ready soon.



I've cooked dinner.
It's ready now.

Vicky has been running
today. Now she's really tired!



Vicky has just run a race.
Now she's receiving a medal.

I've been eating too
much cake. I must eat less!



I've eaten all the cake.
The plate is empty.

We've been looking at
houses. We want to move.



We've bought a new house.
We're moving in June.