

Present Perfect: Simple vs Continuous (B1)

Form · Meaning · Signal words · Typical mistakes

Quick overview

- **Present perfect simple** = *have/has + past participle (V3)* → finished actions with a link to now, life experience, *how many times*, or *states since the past*.
- **Present perfect continuous** = *have/has been + -ing* → *action verbs* for duration from past until now, repeated activity, or recent activity with present results.
- Use **for** + period (*for two years*), **since** + starting point (*since 2022*), **how long** to ask about duration.

Form: Present perfect simple

Affirmative: *I/you/we/they have + V3 · He/she/it has + V3*

☑ I've finished. · ☑ She has found a job.

Negative: *haven't / hasn't + V3*

☑ I haven't seen him yet.

Questions: *Have/Has + subject + V3?*

⊙ Have you met her? · Has he called?

Short answers: Yes, I *have*. / No, she *hasn't*. (Not: "Yes, I've.")

Short forms: 've, 's, *haven't*, *hasn't*

Form: Present perfect continuous

Affirmative: *have/has been + V-ing*

☑ We have been studying all morning.

Negative: *haven't / hasn't been + V-ing*

☑ She hasn't been sleeping well lately.

Questions: *Have/Has + subject + been + V-ing?*

⊙ Has he been working here long?

- *How long* + present perfect (simple/continuous): How long have you been learning English?

Present Perfect — Form & Use

Clear rules, common time expressions, *been vs gone*, *for vs since*, and how it contrasts with the Past Simple.

FORM

Build it

have/has + past participle (V₃) → *regular -ed / irregular 3rd form*

Positive

- I/You/We/They **have seen** it.
- He/She/It **has finished**.

Short forms: 've / 's

Negative

- I/You/We/They **haven't** seen it.
- He/She/It **hasn't** finished.

Use **haven't/hasn't** + V₃

Questions & short answers

Question

Have you finished *yet*?

Has she called?

Short answer

Yes, I have. / *Yes, I've.

No, she hasn't.

USE

When do we use the Present Perfect?

1. **Past events with no time given** (relevant now)

I **have broken** my arm. • She **has found** a job.

2. **Recent events with just, already, yet, recently**

He **has just** called. • I've **already** finished. • Have you finished **yet**?

3. **Life experiences** (time not stated) — with **ever, never, before**, superlatives + **ever**

Have you **ever** eaten insects? • I've **never** read that book. • It's the best film I've **ever** seen.

4. **How many times up to now**

I've watched it **three times**. • We've been to Paris **twice**.

5. **Unfinished time** or situations from past → now — with **for, since, how long, all + time, lately** still true

We've been married **for** 25 years. • I've lived here **since** 2012. • How long have you been friends?