

## Present Perfect Simple

### Grammar – present perfect simple (has / have + p/p)

**Affirmative:** I have played / You have played / He/she/it has played / We have played / You have played (pl.) / They have played

**Negative:** I have not played / You have not played / He/she/it has not played / We have not played / You have not played / They have not played

**Question:** Have I played? / Have you played? / Has he/she/it played? / Have we played? / Have you played? / Have they played?

We use the present perfect when we want to look back from the present to the past.

We can use it to look back on the recent past.

- I've broken my watch, so I don't know what time it is.
- They have cancelled the meeting.
- She's taken my copy. I don't have one.
- The sales team has doubled its turnover.

When we look back on the recent past, we often use the words 'just' 'already' or the word 'yet' (in negatives and questions only).

- We've already talked about that.
- She hasn't arrived yet.
- I've just done it.
- They've already met.
- They don't know yet.
- Have you spoken to him yet?

It can also be used to look back on the more distant past.

- We've been to Singapore a lot over the last few years.
- She's done this type of project many times before.
- We've mentioned it to them on several occasions over the last six months.
- They've often talked about it in the past.

When we look back on the more distant past, we often use the words 'ever' (in questions) and 'never'.

- Have you ever been to Argentina?
- Has he ever talked to you about the problem?
- I've never met Jim and Sally.
- We've never considered investing in Mexico.

We use the present perfect simple to talk about a period of time not finished at the time of speaking.

- I **have had** three cups of coffee today. (today is not finished)
- I **had** three cups of coffee yesterday.
- **Have you seen** the news this week? (this week is not finished)
- **Did you see** the news yesterday?
- I've **been** on holiday twice this year (this year is not finished)
- I **went** on holiday twice last year

Please note that British and American English have different rules for the use of this tense.

## Present Perfect Continuous

### Grammar – past perfect continuous (had + been + ing)

**Affirmative:** I had been doing / You had been doing / He/she/it had been doing / We had been doing / You had been doing (pl.) / They had been doing

**Negative:** I had not been doing / You had not been doing / He/she/it had not been doing / We had not been doing / You had not been doing / They had not been doing

**Question:** Had I been doing? / Had you been doing? / Had he/she/it been doing? / Had we been doing? / Had you been doing? / Had they been doing?

We use the past perfect continuous to look back at a situation in progress.

- It was a good time to invest. Inflation had been falling for several months.
- Before I changed jobs, I had been working on a plan to reduce production costs.
- We had been thinking about buying a new house but then we decided to stay here.

We use it to say what had been happening before something else happened.

- It had been snowing for a while before we left.
- We had been playing tennis for only a few minutes when it started raining.
- He was out of breath when he arrived because he had been running.

We use it when reporting things said in the past.

- She said she had been trying to call me all day.
- They said they had been shopping.
- I told you I had been looking for some new clothes.

Please note that this tense is also called 'The Present Perfect Progressive'

## Present Perfect Simple & Present Perfect Continuous Exercise 1

(Intermediate level)

Put the verbs into the **present perfect simple** or **present perfect continuous**.

1. This traffic is terrible. we \_\_\_\_\_ (**drive**) all day, but we \_\_\_\_\_ (**only do**) 50 miles up to now.
2. Is Jerry ok? He \_\_\_\_\_ (**only answer**) 4 questions but he \_\_\_\_\_ (**sit**) at the test for over an hour.
3. I \_\_\_\_\_ (**try**) to find a job for over 6 months and I \_\_\_\_\_ (**have**) over 20 job interviews, but nothing \_\_\_\_\_ (**come**) up yet.
4. Billy is a great journalist. His newspaper \_\_\_\_\_ (**just offer**) him an editing job.
5. I \_\_\_\_\_ (**call**) my friends all morning to tell them there won't be a party.
6. You are covered in dirt. What \_\_\_\_\_ (**you do**)? - I am sorry. I \_\_\_\_\_ (**play**) football in the rain.
7. Tom and Mary \_\_\_\_\_ (**go**) out with each other for two years now, but they still \_\_\_\_\_ (**not decide**) on marrying.
8. Harry \_\_\_\_\_ (**learn**) to drive since the end of march
9. Barbara can't come with us. her car \_\_\_\_\_ (**break**) down on the motorway.
10. The students \_\_\_\_\_ (**write**) the exam for two hours now.
11. I \_\_\_\_\_ (**play**) tennis all morning and I'm tired now.
12. I \_\_\_\_\_ (**lose**) weight recently.

Adapted from: [www.english-grammar.at](http://www.english-grammar.at)

## Present Perfect Simple & Present Perfect Continuous Exercise 2

(Intermediate level)

Put the verbs into the **present perfect simple** or **present perfect continuous**.

1. John \_\_\_\_\_ (**write**) to his aunt but he \_\_\_\_\_ (**not receive**) a reply yet.
2. Please drive to work carefully. It \_\_\_\_\_ (**snow**) and not all the roads are free.
3. How far \_\_\_\_\_ (**you travel**) this morning?
4. He \_\_\_\_\_ (**save**) up to buy a new tv set.
5. Paula \_\_\_\_\_ (**leave**) work early today to meet her uncle.
6. I \_\_\_\_\_ (**find**) my cheque book at last.
7. The young man is only 23, but he \_\_\_\_\_ (**already climb**) eight peaks in the Himalayas
8. Kay and Bruno \_\_\_\_\_ (**live**) in London for the past 5 years. recently they \_\_\_\_\_ (**try**) to buy a house in the country, but they \_\_\_\_\_ (**not manage**) to sell their flat yet.
9. Jill and Andy \_\_\_\_\_ (**argue**) a lot recently because Jill is always going out with her friends.
10. I \_\_\_\_\_ (**eat**) so much ice cream, I feel sick.
11. He \_\_\_\_\_ (**have**) second thoughts about the job he rejected.
12. The trains \_\_\_\_\_ (**run**) late all morning.
13. Cecilia \_\_\_\_\_ (**cry**) all day because she \_\_\_\_\_ (**fail**) her exams.
14. I \_\_\_\_\_ (**sunbathe**) all morning and now I've got a sunburn

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## Answer key Exercise 1

1. This traffic is terrible. we **have been driving (drive)** all day, but we **have only done (only do)** 50 miles up to now.
2. Is Jerry ok? He **has only answered (only answer)** 4 questions but he **has been sitting (sit)** at the test for over an hour.
3. I **have been trying (try)** to find a job for over 6 months and I **have had (have)** over 20 job interviews, but nothing **has come (come)** up yet.
4. Billy is a great journalist. His newspaper **has just offered (just offer)** him an editing job.
5. I **have been calling (call)** my friends all morning to tell them there won't be a party.
6. You are covered in dirt. What **have you been doing (you do)?** - I am sorry. I **have been playing (play)** football in the rain.
7. Tom and Mary **have been going (go)** out with each other for two years now, but they still **have not decided (not decide)** on marrying.
8. Harry **has been learning (learn)** to drive since the end of march
9. Barbara can't come with us. her car **has broken (break)** down on the motorway.
10. The students **have been writing (write)** the exam for two hours now.
11. I **have been playing (play)** tennis all morning and I'm tired now.
12. I **have lost (lose)** weight recently.

## Answer key Exercise 2

1. John **has written** (**write**) to his aunt but he **has not received** (**not receive**) a reply yet.
2. Please drive to work carefully. It **has been snowing** (**snow**) and not all the roads are free.
3. How far **have you travelled** (**you travel**) this morning?
4. He **has been saving** (**save**) up to buy a new tv set.
5. Paula **has left** (**leave**) work early today to meet her uncle.
6. I **have found** (**find**) my cheque book at last.
7. The young man is only 23, but he **has already climbed** (**already climb**) eight peaks in the Himalayas
8. Kay and Bruno **have lived** (**live**) in London for the past 5 years. recently they **have been trying** (**try**) to buy a house in the country, but they **have not managed** (**not manage**) to sell their flat yet.
9. Jill and Andy **have been arguing** (**argue**) a lot recently because Jill is always going out with her friends.
10. I **have eaten** (**eat**) so much ice cream, I feel sick.
11. He **has had** (**have**) second thoughts about the job he rejected.
12. The trains **have been running** (**run**) late all morning.
13. Cecilia **\_has been crying** (**cry**) all day because she **has failed** (**fail**) her exams.
14. I **have been sunbathing** (**sunbathe**) all morning and now I've got a sunburn