

# Present perfect (*he has worked*) and present perfect progressive (*he has been working*)

## A Starting activities

### 1 We have been working

Present perfect progressive for actions in progress

Work in pairs. You are both repairing an old house. The work is not finished. Explain to a friend what you have been doing. Use the picture to give you ideas. Use the present perfect progressive, like this: *We have been repairing the roof.*



### 2 What have you done?

Present perfect for completed actions

Work in the same pairs. You have finished all the work on the house. Explain what you have done. Use the present perfect, like this: *We have repaired the roof.*

### 3 Choose the rule

Present perfect and present perfect progressive

Work as a class. Look at the sentences below. Notice how the present perfect is correct in 1a and the present perfect progressive is correct in 2a.

- 1
  - a I can go home now. *I've typed all my boss's letters.* ✓
  - b I can go home now. *I've been typing all my boss's letters.* ✗
- 2
  - a You look tired. *Have you been shopping?* ✓
  - b You look tired. *Have you shopped?* ✗

All the rules below are correct, but choose the ones which explain why 1b and 2b are wrong.

- (i) Use the present perfect and not the present perfect progressive to talk about completed actions.
- (ii) Use the present perfect to talk about naturally short actions.
- (iii) Use the present perfect progressive for temporary actions or situations.
- (iv) Use the present perfect progressive to describe actions in the recent past that you think have been happening because of something you can see now (present evidence).

When you have finished, look at Activity note 48 on page 152.

## B Grammar guide

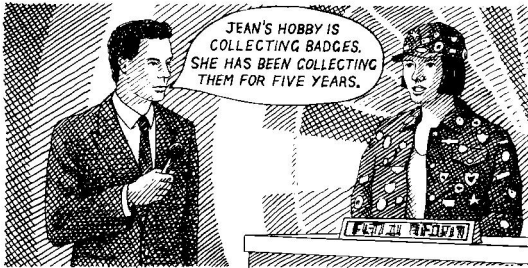
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- 1 Present perfect**
- We use the present perfect and not the present perfect progressive when we want to make it clear that an action has been completed.  
*We have repaired the fridge.* (The fridge works now.)
- We usually use the present perfect and not the present perfect progressive with state verbs: *be, seem, prefer, believe, know, like, love, hate.*  
*How long have you known John?* (NOT *been knowing*)
  - We use the present perfect and not the present perfect progressive for naturally short actions like *break, fall (over), start.*  
*Have you broken the window?* (NOT *been breaking*)
  - We use the present perfect and not the present perfect progressive with *ever, never* and *yet.*  
*I haven't told her yet.* (NOT *been telling*)    *I have never met Tony.*
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- 2 Present perfect progressive**
- We use the present perfect PROGRESSIVE when we want to emphasize an action or situation in PROGRESS and not its completion. *We've been repairing the fridge.* (It may or may not work now.) We use the present perfect progressive for:
- temporary actions and situations:  
*I've been using Joanna's car while I've been staying with her.* (NOT *have used* and *have stayed*)
  - actions in the recent past that we think have been happening because of something we can see now (present evidence):  
*Your eyes are red. You've been crying.* (NOT *have cried*)  
(This is often used to complain. *Hey! Somebody has been drinking my coffee!*)
  - talking about how long something has been going on:  
*How long have you been learning English?*  
*He has been writing to her for ten years.*
  - The present perfect progressive is more commonly used in informal speech.
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- 3 Present perfect or present perfect progressive**
- You can use the present perfect progressive with these state verbs, if you want to emphasize a situation in progress and not its completion: *see, hear, look, taste, smell, want, realize, remember.*  
*I've been hearing funny noises.*  
*He's been looking miserable since his dog died.*  
*I've been wanting one of those new computers for ages.*  
If you do not wish to emphasize the progressive nature of the situation, you can use the present perfect simple with these verbs.  
*I've heard a lot of funny noises lately.*  
*That house has looked a mess for years.*  
*I've always wanted one of those.*
  - Some verbs suggest an action in progress by their meaning and these can be used both with the present perfect and the present perfect progressive, with little difference in meaning: *live, rain, sit, study, wait, work.*  
*It's been raining for hours. It's rained non-stop for hours.*  
*I have worked/have been working at the bank for three years.*

## C Activities

### 1 Quiz contestants

Present perfect progressive for how long something has been going on

- 1 Work with a partner. You are going to take turns to be the host of a television quiz show. Working together, plan or write introductions for both of you. Use present perfect progressive sentences to say things like where your partner has been living, where he or she has been working (or studying) and what interesting things he or she has been doing lately.  
Example: *This is Jean. She has been working as a cleaner for the last three weeks.*



- 2 Work as a class. Introduce each other to the class as television quiz contestants.

### 2 A new plan for the club

Present perfect progressive

- 1 Work in pairs, A and B. You and your partner have just taken over a youth club for twelve to eighteen year-olds. There have been problems with the club. You and your partner are going to work together to solve some of the problems.  
**Person A:** Read Activity note 10 on page 138.  
**Person B:** Read Activity note 49 on page 152.
- 2 Work as a class. Tell the class about any problems not in the Activity notes and your solutions to all the problems. Add the problems that other people say to your list.

### 3 The TV news

Present perfect and present perfect progressive

- 1 Work as a class. Plan a television news programme, with five or six items of news in it. Use the present perfect for finished events and the present perfect progressive for events which are still going on. You can use real events or make them up. Use the ideas below to help you.

#### Ideas

statesman's visit to . . .  
forest fire in . . .  
plane crash in . . .  
tennis match between . . .  
new film about . . .  
inflation (up/down)  
royal baby  
fighting in . . .  
. . . met the president of . . .  
a new television series about . . .  
prison riot at . . .

Examples: *There has been a prison riot at the new prison and several prisoners have climbed onto the roof. . . Stephen Spielberg has been making a new film about . . .*

- 2 Work as a class. Five or six people in the class say one item each of the television news programme. Help anybody who needs help with his or her item. List sentences from the news with the present perfect or present perfect progressive.

## D Accuracy practice

### 1 Present perfect or present perfect progressive? Choose the correct one, (a) or (b).

- 1 (a) I have been painting } the kitchen. I should be finished soon.  
(b) I have painted
- 2 (a) You have been breaking } my window!  
(b) You have broken
- 3 (a) I've liked } the Beatles since I was twelve.  
(b) I've been liking
- 4 Oh no! Karen has just { (a) been falling over.  
(b) fallen over.
- 5 (a) Somebody has read } my letters. This one has been opened.  
(b) Somebody has been reading
- 6 (a) It has been snowing } here for days. It won't stop until next week.  
(b) It has snowed

### 2 Put the state verbs in brackets into the present perfect (*I have remembered*) or the present perfect progressive (*I have been remembering*).

- 1 Happy birthday, darling. I (remember) to buy you a present.
- 2 Lately, I (remember) the happy times we spent together all those years ago.
- 3 She (prefer) classical music to pop ever since she was a child.
- 4 Surely Andrew (believe) in fairies for long enough. Let's tell him the truth.
- 5 Arthur (taste) all the food as I put it on the table.

### 3 Write sentences. Use the present perfect or the present perfect progressive or both. Write two sentences where possible.

The information is from a child's school report.

- 1 He/not do/enough work
- 2 He/start/this new subject well
- 3 He/make/a bit more effort this term
- 4 He/not learn/to behave properly in class yet
- 5 He/never like/maths, and he/do/very little work all term

### 4 Present perfect and present perfect progressive in context. Put in the right form of the verb in brackets. Sometimes more than one answer is possible.

This is a job reference in formal English.

William Empson <sup>1</sup>\_\_\_\_ (work) in the Parks Department for the last six months. Throughout this time he <sup>2</sup>\_\_\_\_ (train) as a gardener under my supervision and I can confirm that I <sup>3</sup>\_\_\_\_ (watch) his progress closely. I must inform you that Mr Empson <sup>4</sup>\_\_\_\_ (be) in prison for burglary. However, during his time with us he <sup>5</sup>\_\_\_\_ (be) in charge of money several times and <sup>6</sup>\_\_\_\_ (never/attempt) to steal it. For most of his time here he <sup>7</sup>\_\_\_\_ (help) to grow new trees in the greenhouses. He <sup>8</sup>\_\_\_\_ (learn) quickly and he <sup>9</sup>\_\_\_\_ (not/be) late for work once. We would recommend Mr Empson for the post he <sup>10</sup>\_\_\_\_ (apply) for.