

Using the present perfect simple and present perfect continuous.

When it comes to understanding English grammar, practice makes perfect. In this week's post, practice will make the present perfect as we go over how to correctly use this verb tense to give your English level an extra boost.

Many English learners struggle with the present perfect and when to correctly use it. To put it simply, we use the present perfect to talk about actions and events that occurred in the past but are still connected to the present. Within the present perfect there are two forms, the simple and continuous, the key differences will be explained below:

Present Perfect Simple.

The present perfect simple is formed with the use of the verb have/has with the past participle. The structures for affirmative, negative and interrogative sentences are shown below:

Affirmative	Negative	Interrogative
He has watched the film. <i>Él ha visto la película.</i>	He hasn't watched the film. <i>No ha visto la película.</i>	Has he watched the film? <i>¿Ha visto la película?</i>

The present perfect simple is used to talk about actions or states that happened in the past and have a result in the present. In the case of the example above the result would be that the film has been seen by the person.

Present Perfect Continuous.

The present perfect continuous is used to talk about an action or event that started in the past but is still happening now. In addition, while the present perfect simple emphasizes more the result of an action, the continuous puts more focus on the action itself or the time period in which the action is taking place. The tense is formed with the use of the verb have/has, the past participle of the verb to be (been), and the gerund or -ing form of the verb. Here is how the present perfect continuous is formed:

Affirmative	Negative	Interrogative
We have been waiting 20 minutes for our food. <i>Hemos estado esperando 20 minutos para nuestra comida.</i>	We haven't been waiting 20 minutes for our food. <i>No hemos estado esperando 20 minutos para nuestra comida.</i>	Have we been waiting 20 minutes for our food? <i>¿Hemos estado esperando 20 minutos para nuestra comida?</i>

Remember that some verbs such as state verbs are rarely used in the -ing form such as want, know, understand, hate etc. As a result, use these verbs in the present perfect simple.

I hope that this post helps to clear up any doubts that you may have had about these verb tenses. Take a look at the exercises in the PDF to practice your knowledge of the perfect tenses.

Complete the sentences using either the present perfect simple or present perfect continuous:

1. I _____ (study) for three hours, and I still don't understand the concept.
2. Jane _____ (apply) to work at the company.
3. The children _____ (play) in the garden all afternoon, and now they're exhausted.
4. She _____ (try) to call you for the past hour. Where have you been?
5. They _____ (wait) for over an hour.
6. How long _____ you _____ (learn) Spanish before you visited Madrid?
7. The team _____ (practice) for the upcoming match every day this week.
8. I _____ (read) this book since last month, and I still haven't finished it.
9. He _____ (build) a treehouse in the backyard for the last few weeks.
10. Sarah _____ (live) in London for ten years, and she _____ (enjoy) every moment of it.

Answer key:

1. I **have been studying** for three hours, and I still don't understand the concept.
2. Jane **has applied** to work at the company.
3. The children **have been playing** in the garden all afternoon, and now they're exhausted.
4. She **has been trying** to call you for the past hour. Where have you been?
5. They **have been waiting** for over an hour.
6. How long **have you been learning** Spanish before you visited Madrid?
7. The team **has been practicing** for the upcoming match every day this week.
8. I **have been reading** this book since last month, and I still haven't finished it.
9. He **has been building** a treehouse in the backyard for the last few weeks.
10. Sarah **has lived** in London for ten years, and she **has been enjoying** every moment of it.