

# *Perfect and Perfect Progressive Tenses*

# Present Perfect

- (a) Mrs. Ola *has been a teacher since 2002.*
- (b) I *have been in this city since last May.*
- (c) We *have been here since nine o'clock.*
- (d) Rita knows Rob. They met two months ago. She *has known him for two months. I met him three years ago. I have known him for three years.*
- (e) I *have known Ola since I was in high school.*

The present perfect is often used with *since* and *for* to talk about situations that began in the past and continue up to now.

In (a): situation = being a teacher

time frame = from 2002 up to now

Notice the use of *since* vs. *for* in the examples:

*since* + a specific point in time (e.g., 2002, last May, nine o'clock)

*for* + a length of time (e.g., two months, three years)

In (e): *since* + a time clause (i.e., a subject and verb may follow *since*).

# Cont...Present Perfect

(f) — *Have you ever seen snow?*

— *No, I haven't. I've never seen snow. But Ola has seen snow.*

(g) *Have you finished your homework yet? I still haven't finished mine. Ali has already finished his.*

The present perfect can talk about *events that have (or haven't) happened before now. The exact time of the event is unspecified.*

The adverbs *ever, never, yet, still, and already* are often used with the present perfect.

In (f): event = seeing snow

time frame = from the beginning of their lives up to now

In (g): event = doing homework

time frame = from the time the people started up to now

# Cont...Present Perfect

(h) *We have had three tests so far this term.*

(i) *I've met many people since I came here.*

The present perfect can also express *an event that has occurred repeatedly from a point in the past up to the present time. The event may happen again.*

In (h): repeated event = taking tests

time frame = from the beginning of the term up to now

In (i): repeated event = meeting people

time frame = from the time I came here up to now

# How do we use the Present Perfect Tense?

It's used when there's a connection with the past and with the present. There are basically three uses for the present perfect:

1. experience
2. change
3. continuing situation

# Present perfect tense for experience

We often use the present perfect tense to talk about **experience** from the past. We are not interested in **when** you did something. We want to know **if** you did it:

I have seen your father.

He has lived in Cairo.

Have you been there?

Past: The action or state was in the past.

Present: In my head, I have a memory now.

Connection with the past: the event was in the past.

Connection with the present: in my head, **now**, I have a memory of the event; I **know** something about the event; I have **experience** of it.

# Present perfect tense for change

I have bought a car.

Ali has broken his leg.

Has the price gone up?

The police have arrested the killer.

Past	Present	Future
Last week I didn't have a car.	Now I have a car.	
Yesterday Ali had a good leg.	Now he has a bad leg.	
Was the price \$ 10 yesterday?	Is the price \$12 today?	
Yesterday the killer was free.	Now he is in prison.	

## Present perfect tense for continuing situation

We often use the present perfect tense to talk about **continuing situation**. This is a state that started in the **past** and continues in the **present** (and will probably continue into the future). This is a **state** (not an action). We usually use **for** or **since** with this structure.

I have worked here since June.

He has been ill for 2 days.

How long have you known Ola?

Past: The situation started in the past.

Present: It continues up to now.

Future: (It will probably continue into the future)

# The present perfect is also used when...

we see things happening in the past but having a result in the present.

*We've washed the dishes.* (They're clean now)

*We've eaten all the eggs.* (There aren't left)

*The plane has landed.* (It's on the ground now)

*They've learned the words.* (They know the words)

# Ever and never

We can use **ever** and **never** with the present perfect.  
We use **ever** in questions. In *Have you ever been to Cairo?* The word **ever** means 'in your whole life up to the present time'. **Never** means 'not ever'.

*Have you ever played tennis?~ No, never.*

*I've never ridden a motor bike in my life.*

*You've never given me flowers before?*

*This is the most expensive hotel we've ever stayed in.*

## Just & the immediate past

The present perfect can also be used to indicate completed activities in the immediate past; as,

*He has just left.*

*It has just struck ten.*

The effect is more important than the action

We use the present perfect to describe past events when we think more of their effect in the present than of the action itself; as,  
*I have cut my finger.* (and it's bleeding now)

*I have finished my work.* (now I am free)

# Cont...Present Perfect

contractions:

( j) *I've been there.*

*You've been there.*

*We've been there.*

*They've been there.*

*He's been there.*

*She's been there.*

*It's been interesting.*

*usually Have and has are contracted*

*with personal pronouns in informal writing, as .in (j)*

*note: He's there.*

*He's = He is*

*He's been there.*

*He's = He has*

## Do exercise 4. Looking at grammar.(PAGE 39)

Complete the sentences with **since** or **for**.

1. There has been snow on the ground **since** New Year's Day.
2. The weather has been cold **for** a long time.
3. Maria has studied English **for** less than a year.
4. Mr. and Mrs. Roberts have been together **since** they were in college.
5. They have known each other **for** more than fifty years.
6. We haven't seen Aziz **since** last month.
7. I've had a cold **for** over a week.
8. I haven't heard from my sister **since** the beginning of March.

# Have and Has in Spoken English

(a) *How have you been?*

*Spoken: How /v/ you been?*

*Or*

*How/ əv/ you been?*

(b) *Jane has already eaten lunch.*

*Spoken: Jane/z/ already eaten lunch.*

*Or*

*Jane/əz/ already eaten lunch.*

(c) *Mike has already left.*

*Spoken: Mike /s/ already left.*

*Or*

*Mike /əs/ already left.*

*In spoken English, the present perfect helping verbs has and have are often reduced following nouns and question words.*

*In (a): have can sound like /v/ or /əv/.*

*In (b): has can sound like /z/ or /əz/.*

*In (c): has can sound like /s/ or /əs/.*  
*note: Jane/z/ eaten.*

*Jane's = Jane has.*

*Jane/z/ here.*

*Jane's = Jane is*

*Mike/s/left. Mike's = Mike has*

*Mike/s/here. Mike's = Mike is*

# NOTE

In very informal writing, *has* is sometimes contracted with nouns (e.g., *Jane's already eaten.*) and question words (e.g., *Where's he gone?*). *Have* is rarely contracted in writing except with pronouns (e.g., *I've*).

## Present Perfect vs. Simple Past

(a) I've *met Linda*, but I *haven't met her* husband. *Have you met them?*

The present perfect is used to talk about *past events when there is no specific mention of time.*

In (a): The speaker is talking about *some unspecified time before now.*

# Present Perfect vs. Simple Past

(b) *I met Helen yesterday at a party. Her husband was there too, but I didn't meet him. Did you meet them at the party?*

The simple past is used when there is a *specific mention of time*.

In (b): The speaker is thinking of a specific time: yesterday

# Present Perfect vs. Simple Past

(c) Sami *has been a teacher for ten years.*  
He loves teaching.

The present perfect is used for *situations that began in the past and continue to the present.*

In (c): The present perfect tells us that Sami is still a teacher now.

## Present Perfect vs. Simple Past

(d) Ali **was** a teacher *for ten years, from 1995 to 2005*. Now he is a salesman.

The simple past is used for *situations that began and ended in the past*.

In (d): The simple past tells us that Ali is not a teacher now.

# Exercise 13. (Page 44)

Complete the sentences. Use the simple past or the present perfect form of the verbs in parentheses.

1. Fatima is from a hot, arid part of her country. She (*see, never*) *has never seen snow*.
2. Last January, I (*see*) *saw snow for the first time in my life*.
3. Last night my friend and I (*have*) *have already left some free time, so we (go) went to a show*.
4. Since classes began, I (*have, not*) *haven't had much free time. My classes keep me really busy*.
5. Ming Won (*be*) *has been in this class for three months. His English is getting better and better. He plans to take this class until the end of May*.
6. Mrs. Perez (*be*) *was in our class for three months, but then she left school to get a job*.
7. Late-breaking news! A major earthquake (*occur, just*) *has just occurred in southern California. It (occur) occurred at 9:25 A.M. Pacific Standard Time*.
8. I admit that I (*get\**) *have gotten older since I last (see) saw you, but with any luck at all, I (get, also) am also getting wiser*.
9. A: Are you taking Chemistry 101 this semester?  
B: No, I (*take, already\*\**) *have already taken it. I (take) took it last semester. This semester I'm in 102*.
10. Greg Adams? Yes, I know him. I (*know*) *have known him since college*.
11. Joe North passed away? I'm sorry to hear that. I (*know*) *knew him well when we were in college together*.

# Present Perfect Progressive Tense

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**(a) Right now I *am sitting* at my desk.**

*The present progressive expresses an activity in progress right now.*

(b) I *have been sitting* at my desk *since* seven o'clock. I *have been sitting* here *for* two hours.

The pre sent perfect progressive expresses *how long an activity has been in progress*. In other words, it expresses *the duration of an activity that began in the past and continues to the present*.

(c) *It's been raining all day. It's still raining* right now.

Time expressions often used with this tense are: *since and for, all day/all morning/all week.*

# Note

In (c): *It's been raining.*

*I t 's = It has*

*.It's still raining*

*I t 's = It is*

(d) I've **known** Ali since he was a child.

*For non-progressive verbs such as know, the present perfect (not the present perfect progressive) is used to express the duration of a situation that began in the past and continues to the present.*

*INCORRECT: ~~I've been knowing~~ Ali since he was child.*

(e) How long *have you been living* here?

( f ) How long *have you lived* here?

The two sentences have the same meaning.

(g) Ali *has been wearing* glasses since he was ten.

(h) Ali *has worn* glasses since he was ten.

The two sentences have the same meaning.




**I've lived** in Gaza my whole life.

**OR**

**I've been living** in Gaza my whole life.


*(I was born in Gaza, and I'm still living there)*

*The two tenses talk about things started  
in the past, continue up to the present,  
and may continue into the future.*




For some (not all) verbs, the idea of *how long can be expressed by either tense — the present perfect progressive or the present perfect.*

Either tense can be used only when the verb expresses the duration of present activities or situations that happen regularly, usually, habitually: e.g., *live, work, teach, study, wear glasses, play chess, etc.*



I've been living in this flat for three years, but next month I'm moving to a new villa.

*The present progressive can indicate that the action is temporary.*

- 
- ( i ) *I've been thinking* about looking for a different job. This one doesn't pay enough.
- ( j ) All of the students *have been studying* hard. Final exams start next week.

When the tense is used without any mention of time, it expresses *a general activity in progress recently, lately*. For example, (i) means *I've been thinking about this recently, lately*.



I've been reading a book on wild animals.

(The activity is unfinished)

I've read a book on wild animals.

(I finished the book)

The present perfect without for or since refers to an activity or state that is finished.

She's had three cups of coffee this morning.

NOT

~~She's been having three cups of coffee this morning.~~

We don't usually use the present perfect progressive to talk about how many times someone has done something or how many things someone has done.



I've been swimming.

That's why my hair is wet.

Why are your clothes so dirty?

What have you been doing?

The present perfect progressive can also be used to talk about an action that began in the past and has recently stopped or just stopped.



Ali's hands are very dirty.  
He **has been fixing** the car.

We are interested in the  
action. It doesn't matter  
whether something has been  
finished or not.

# Past Perfect

# Past Perfect


(a) Sami arrived at 10:00.

Ali left at 9:30.

In other words, Ali *had* already *left* when Sami arrived.

1st: Ali left.

2nd: Sami arrived.



*The past perfect expresses an activity that was completed before another activity or time in the past.*


*By the time Sami got there, Ali had already left.*

Adverb clauses with *by the time* are frequently used with the past perfect in the main clause.



She **wants** to visit Cairo  
because she **has seen** a film  
about it.

She **wanted** to visit Cairo  
because she **had seen** a film  
about it.



The relationship between the **simple past** tense and **past perfect** is similar to the relationship between the **simple present** tense and the **present perfect**. In both cases, the event in the perfect form takes place **before** the event in the simple tense.

She **had met** the manager on many occasions (before she got the job offer).

*Use the past perfect to talk about repeated actions in the past that took place **before** another event in the past.*



Sami *had left before* Ali got there.


Sami *left before* Ali got there.

*The two sentences have the same  
meaning.*

*After the guests **had left**, I went to bed.*

*After the guests **left**, I went to bed.*

*The two sentences have the same meaning.*



*If either **before** or **after** is used in the sentence, the past perfect is often not necessary because the time relationship is already clear. The simple past may be used for both events.*

Ali didn't go to the movies with us.

He **had already seen** it.

I saw the film last night. I **had never seen**  
it before.


***Already, yet, ever, and never** are often  
used with the past perfect to emphasize  
the event which occurred first.*

*Actual spoken words:*

*I lost my keys.*

*Reported words:*

*Mona said that she had  
lost her keys.*



*The past perfect is commonly used in reported speech.*

*If the actual spoken words use the simple past, the past perfect is often used in reporting those words.*


*Common reporting verbs include tell (someone), say, find out, learn, and discover.*

*Written: Bill **felt** great that evening.  
Earlier in the day, Annie **had caught**  
one fish, and he **had caught** three.  
They **had had** a delicious picnic  
near the lake and then **had gone**  
swimming again. It **had been** a  
nearly perfect vacation day.*



The past perfect is often found in more formal writing such as fiction.

In the above sentences the fiction writer uses the simple past to say that an event happened (*Bill felt great*), and then uses *the past* perfect to explain what had happened before that event.



*I'd finished. You'd finished.*  
*We'd finished. They'd finished.*  
*She'd finished. He 'd finished.*  
*It 'd finished.*

*Had is often contracted with  
personal pronouns in  
informal writing.*


note: *I'd finished. I'd = I had*

*I'd like to go. I'd = I would*

# Past Perfect Progressive

Ali finally came at six o'clock. I *had been waiting* for him *since* four-thirty.

The police *had been looking* for the criminal *for* two years before they caught him.



The past perfect progressive  
emphasizes the *duration of an activity*  
*that was in progress before another*  
*activity or time in the past.*

**note:** The past perfect progressive is  
used infrequently (not happening very often)  
compared to other verb tenses.



It was 2:00 P.M. The runners **had been running** since 10:48 A.M.

*The progressive emphasizes the process, not the end result.*

Ali **had been running** for 2 hours, 9 minutes, and 29 seconds when he crossed the finished line.

*Notice that the context tells you if the past perfect progressive action continued or not.*



Notice the difference:

When the race started, it **was raining**  
and the streets were wet. (*It was still  
raining during the race*)

When the race started, it **had been  
raining**, and the streets were wet. (*It  
wasn't raining during the race. It had  
already stopped*)



When Mona got home, her hair was still wet because she *had been swimming*.

I went to Ali's house after the funeral. His eyes were red because *he had been crying*.



This tense also may express  
an

*activity in progress close in  
time to another activity or  
time in the past.*

*Actual spoken words:*

*I **have been waiting** for you.*

*Reported words:*

*Lia told me that she **had been waiting** for me.*

*The past perfect progressive also occurs in reported speech.*