

how long have you (been) ... ?

A Study this example situation:



Dan and Kate are married. They got married exactly 20 years ago, so today is their 20th wedding anniversary.

They **have been** married **for 20 years**.

We say: They **are** married. (*present*)

but How long have they **been** married?
(*not* How long are they married?)

They **have been** married **for 20 years**.
(*not* They are married for 20 years)

(*present perfect*)

We use the *present perfect* to talk about something that began in the past and still continues now.

Compare the *present* and *present perfect*:

- Paul is in hospital.
- but* He's **been** in hospital **since Monday**. (= He **has** been ...)
(*not* Paul is in hospital since Monday)
- We **know** each other very well.
- but* We've **known** each other **for a long time**.
(*not* We know)
- Do they **have** a car?
- but* How long **have** they **had** their car?
- She's **waiting** for somebody.
- but* She **hasn't been** waiting very long.

present
he is
we know
do they have
she is waiting

present perfect
he has been
we have known
have they had
she has been waiting

past

now

B I've known / I've had / I've lived etc. is the *present perfect simple*.
I've been learning / I've been waiting etc. is the *present perfect continuous*.

When we ask or say 'how long', the continuous is more usual (see Unit 10):

- I've **been learning** English **since January**.
- It's **been raining** all morning.
- Richard **has been doing** the same job **for 20 years**.
- 'How long **have** you **been driving**?' 'Since I was 17.'

Some verbs (for example, **know** and **like**) are not normally used in the continuous:

- How long **have** you **known** Jane? (*not* have you been knowing)
- I've **had** these shoes for ages. (*not* I've been having)

See also Units 4A and 10C. For **have**, see Unit 17.

C You can use either the continuous or simple with **live** and **work**:

- Julia **has been living** in this house for a long time. *or* Julia **has lived** ...
- How long **have** you **been working** here? *or* How long **have** you **worked** here?

But we use the simple (**have lived** etc.) with **always**:

- I've **always lived** in the country. (*not* always been living)

D We say 'I haven't (done something) **since/for** ...' (*present perfect simple*):

- I **haven't seen** Tom since Monday. (= Monday was the last time I saw him)
- Sarah **hasn't phoned** for ages. (= the last time she phoned was ages ago)

Exercises

11.1 Which is right?

- 1 Ben is a friend of mine. I know / I've known him very well. (I know is correct)
- 2 I like your house. How long do you live / have you lived here?
- 3 You'll need an umbrella if you go out now. It's raining / It's been raining.
- 4 The weather is / has been awful since I arrived here.
- 5 I'm sorry I'm late. Are you waiting / Have you been waiting long?
- 6 We've moved. We're living / We've been living in New Street now.
- 7 I met Maria only recently. I don't know / I haven't known her very long.
- 8 Lisa is in Germany. She's / She's been there on a business trip.
- 9 That's a very old bike. How long do you have / have you had it?
- 10 I'm not feeling good. I'm feeling / I've been feeling ill all day.

11.2 Read the situations and write questions using the words in brackets.

- 1 A friend tells you that Paul is in hospital. You ask him:
(how long / Paul / hospital?) How long has Paul been in hospital?
- 2 You know that Jane is a good friend of Katherine's. You ask Jane:
(how long / you / know / Katherine?)
- 3 Your friend's sister went to Australia some time ago and she's still there. You ask your friend:
(how long / sister / in Australia?)
- 4 You meet a woman who tells you that she teaches English. You ask her:
(how long / you / teach / English?)
.....
- 5 Tom always wears the same jacket. It's very old. You ask him:
(how long / you / have / that jacket?)
- 6 You are talking to a friend about Joe, who now works at the airport. You ask your friend:
(how long / Joe / work / airport?)
.....
- 7 You meet somebody on a plane. She says that she lives in Chicago. You ask her:
(you / always / live / in Chicago?)

11.3 Complete B's answers to A's questions.

- | A | B |
|--|--|
| 1 Paul is in hospital, isn't he? | Yes, he <u>has been</u> in hospital since Monday. |
| 2 Do you see Lisa very often? | No, I <u>haven't seen</u> her for three months. |
| 3 Is Paul married? | Yes, he married for ten years. |
| 4 Is Amy married? | Yes, she married to a German guy. |
| 5 Do you still play tennis? | No, I tennis for years. |
| 6 Are you waiting for the bus? | Yes, I for about 20 minutes. |
| 7 You know Mel, don't you? | Yes, we each other a long time. |
| 8 Jack is never ill, is he? | No, he ill since I've known him. |
| 9 Martin lives in Italy, doesn't he? | Yes, he in Milan. |
| 10 Sue lives in Berlin, doesn't she? | Yes, she in Berlin for many years. |
| 11 Is Joe watching TV? | Yes, he TV all evening. |
| 12 Do you watch TV a lot? | No, I TV since last weekend. |
| 13 Do you have a headache? | Yes, I a headache all morning. |
| 14 Do you go to the cinema a lot? | No, I to the cinema for ages. |
| 15 Would you like to go to New York one day? | Yes, I to go to New York.
(use always / want) |

UNIT 11 ANSWERS

11.1

2. have you lived
3. It's raining
4. has been
5. Have you been waiting
6. We're living
7. I haven't known
8. She's
9. have you had
10. I've been feeling

11.2

2. How long have you known Katherine?
3. How long has your sister been in Australia?
4. How long have you been teaching English? / How long have you taught English?
5. How long have you had that jacket?
6. How long has Joe been working at the airport? / How long has Joe worked at the airport?
7. Have you always lived in Chicago?

11.3

3. 's been / has been
4. 's / is
5. haven't played
6. 've been waiting / have been waiting
7. 've known / have known
8. hasn't been
9. lives or 's living / is living
10. 's lived / has lived or 's been living / has been living
11. 's been watching / has been watching
12. haven't watched
13. ve had / have had
14. haven't been
15. 've always wanted / have always wanted