



Present Perfect

1. The present perfect (*have/has + past participle*) expresses an action that started in the past and continued until now. It could continue into the future.

*I've been training for this race for about five months.
I've known Satoshi for six months.*

2. It is used when a past action has an effect on the present. An action happened in the past and has a present result:

*You look different! What's happened?
Thanks, I've had a makeover.*

*Why is your hair wet?
I've been swimming.*

3. It is used to give news of an event:

*There has been a minor earthquake
and some homes have been damaged.*

Wow! You've had a haircut.

4. When more information is given of the event, it is usually given in the simple past:

People in the northern suburbs felt the earth shaking. A few people received minor injuries.

5. If questions are asked using 'when' or 'where', the simple past is used:

*Where was the worst earthquake damage?
The worst damage was in the northern suburbs of the city.*

*Where did you get your haircut?
At the mall.*

6. The present perfect is used to talk about things we have done in our lifetime. Often 'ever' and 'never' are used in these sentences:

*Have you ever been skiing?
Yes. I've done a lot of skiing in Switzerland.
(In this example, exactly when the speaker
did the skiing is not important.)*

*Have you ever tried bungee jumping?
No, I've never done that.*

7. The present perfect continuous focuses on how long an action has lasted:

*I've been trying to call you all morning but your
mobile was switched off.*

*I've been standing at this bus stop for
twenty minutes.*

8. The present perfect continuous focuses on the activity in progress. In these examples, the activities have not finished:

*I've been trying to do this math problem for the last hour. It's really difficult.
I've been writing an essay. It is nearly finished.*

9. State verbs (e.g. verbs like **know**, **love**, **like**, **own** and **want**.) do not usually take the continuous:

I've loved you for months. NOT ~~I've been loving you for months.~~

I've had this computer for three years but it has never given me any trouble. NOT ~~I've been having this computer for three years.~~



Choose the correct form in the sentences below.

1. **I've visited / I visited** Tonga three times and New Caledonia five times. **I've visited / I visited** Hawaii last year.

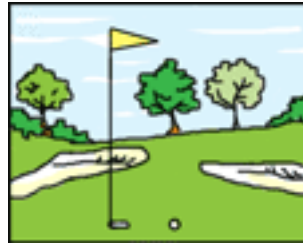
2. How long **have you lived / did you live** there?

Four years. It's a lovely city but I'm glad that I'm living in Manchester now.

3. In 1995 **I have left / left** Virginia and moved to California.

4. **I've only lived / I only lived** here for a short time, but I really love this city. I don't want to live anywhere else.

5. What time **has your plane arrived / did your plane arrive**?



6. **Have you ever played / Did you ever play** golf?

Yes, a few times.

7. It **hasn't rained / didn't rain** this month.

Yes, the weather **has been / was** wonderful, but I hope we get some rain soon.

8. John, you are taller! You **have grown / grew** since I saw you last.

9. Alexander Graham Bell **has invented / invented** the telephone.

10. She is very creative. She **has made / made** three short films which have all won international awards.

11. How long **have you been knowing / have you known** Mike?

I've been knowing / I've known him for three years.

12. **I've been doing / I've done** my homework. It isn't finished yet.

13. It's hot in here!

Yes, **I've been cooking / I've cooked** all morning.

14. Your car looks very shiny.

Thanks, **I've been polishing / I've polished** it.



Anna Grammar's Grammar Dog, 'Wolfie'
email: wolfie@english-to-go.com
Sketch by Iain Stewart

Answers

1. I've visited; I visited, 2. did you live, 3. left, 4. I've only lived, 5. did, 6. Have you ever played, 7. hasn't rained; has been, 8. have grown, 9. invented, 10. has made, 11. have you known; I've known, 12. I've been doing, 13. I've been cooking, 14. I've polished.