

# HOW PERFECT IS YOUR PRESENT PERFECT TENSE ?

## First the IDEAS & then the EXERCISES

### Present perfect simple refers to:

Recent events, without a definite time given. The recentness may be indicated by just.

*We've missed the turning. I've just seen a ghost!*

Indefinite events, which happened at an unknown time in the past. No definite time is given.

*Jim has had three car accidents, (up to the present)*

Indefinite events which may have an obvious result in the present.

*I've twisted my ankle, (that's why I'm limping)*

With state verbs, a state which lasts up to the present.

*I've lived here for the past ten years.*

A habitual action in a period of time up to the present.

*I've been jogging every morning for the last month.*

### Contrast with past simple

Past simple is used with time expressions which refer to definite times. The time may be stated or understood. Compare:

*I've bought a new car. (indefinite)*

*/ bought the car after all. (implied definite: the car we talked about)*

Choice between past simple and present perfect for recent events may depend on the attitude of the speaker. This in turn may depend on whether the speaker feels distant in time or place from the event.

*I've left my wallet in the car. I'm going back to get it.*

Here the speaker may be about to return, and feels that the event is connected with the present.

*/ left my wallet in the car. I'm going back to get it.*

The speaker may feel separated in time from the event, or be further away. Present perfect continuous (progressive) can refer to a range of meanings, depending on the time expression used and the context.

A state which lasts up to the present moment

*I've been waiting for you for three hours!*

An incomplete activity

*I've been cleaning the house but I still haven't finished.*

To emphasise duration

*I've been writing letters all morning.*

A recently finished activity

*I've been running. That's why I look hot.*

A repeated activity

*I've been taking French lessons this year.*

### Contrasts with present perfect simple

There may be little contrast when some state verbs are used.

*How long have you lived here?*

*How long have you been living here?*

Some verbs (especially sit, lie, wait and stay) prefer the continuous form. There may be a contrast between completion and incompleteness, especially if the number of items completed is mentioned.

Completed: emphasis on achievement

*I've ironed five shirts this morning.*

Incomplete, or recently completed: emphasis on duration

*I've been ironing my shirts this morning.*

Meaning with present perfect verb forms is associated with certain time expressions.

Contrast with past simple may depend on the choice of time expression.

Past simple: referring to a specific finished time.

*yesterday, last week, on Sunday*

Present perfect: with 'indefinite' time expressions meaning 'up to now'.

*since 1968, already*

Many time expressions are not associated with a specific verb form, since they refer both to finished time or time up to the present, depending on the speaker's perspective.

*/ haven't seen Helen recently. I saw Jim recently.*



### Others include:

for, never, before, all my life, for a long time, today, all day, every day

These may be used with either past simple or present perfect.



### 1 Underline the correct word or phrase in each sentence.

- I can't believe it, Inspector. You mean that Sami **stole/has stolen/has been stealing** money from all till this time!
- You three boys look very guilty! What **did you do/have you done/have you been doing** since I **left/have left** the room?
- Why on earth **didn't you tell/haven't you told** me about that loose floorboard? I **tripped/have tripped** over it just now and hurt myself.
- It's a long time since I **saw/have seen/have been seeing your brother Paul. What **did he do/has he done/has he been doing** lately?**
- I can't believe that you **ate/have eaten/have been eating** three pizzas already! I **only brought/have only brought them** in fifteen minutes ago!
- Don't forget that you **didn't see/haven't seen** Mrs Dolly. She **has waited/has been waiting** outside since 10.30.
- What **did you think/have you thought** of Brighton? **Did you stay/Have you stayed** there long?
- I feel really tired. I **weeded/have weeded/have been weeding** the garden for the last three hours and I **didn't rest/haven't rested** for a single moment.
- I'm having problems with Reza. He **has called/has been calling** me up in the middle of the night and **told/telling** me his troubles.
- How long **did you have/have you had/have you been having** driving lessons? And **did you take/have you taken/have you been taking** your test yet?

### 3

### Put each verb in brackets into the most appropriate perfect or past verb form.

- So far we ..haven't noticed. (not/notice) anything unusual, but we..... (not/pay) very close attention.
- I'm sorry I ..... (not/come) to class lately.
- I ..... (work) late in the evenings for the past fortnight.
- I wonder if Mary (reach) home yet? She..... (leave) too late to catch the bus.
- Here is the news. The Home Office ..... (announce) that the two prisoners who (escape) from Dartmoor prison earlier this morning ..... (give themselves up) to local police.
- ..... (you/make up) your minds? What..... (you/decide) to do?
- Haris ..... (leave) home rather suddenly and we..... (not/hear) from him since.
- Recent research ..... (show) that Columbus..... (not/discover) America, but that Vikings..... (land) there five hundred years before him.
- I think that people ..... (become) tired of the poor quality of television programmes, though they..... (improve) lately.
- ..... (something/happen) to the phone lines? I..... (try) to get through to Glasgow for the past hour.
- Bill ..... (get) that new job, but he..... (complain) about it ever since.



### 2

### Decide how many different endings (1-10) you can find for sentences (a-j). The sentences you make must be appropriate and meaningful.

- I haven't been feeling very well ... .
- I went to the dentist's
- I've lived here
- Don't worry. I haven't been waiting
- I've written two pages
- I waited outside your house
- I've warned you about this
- I haven't made a decision
- The repair worked
- I've decided to believe you

- time and time again.
- all my life.
- so far.
- for the time being.
- for the past hour or two.
- yet.
- till half past eight.
- for a while.
- the other day.
- long.



Find the answers in next MONDAY issue

ANSWER KEY TO THE LAST EIS PAGE ACTIVITIES (DATED NOVEMBER 9, 2015)

### KEY

#### The Passive Voice

Complete the story using either the active or passive voice.

- is said 2. is being sold 3. is reported 4. have heard 5. was built 6. has had 7. to have stayed 8. has been living 9. was being restored 10. have read 11. have been looking 12. haven't found

### KEY

Complete the following sentences using the passive voice.

- was written 2. are needed 3. wouldn't have been sacked 4. was suspected 5. was held 6. was being restored 7. is never answered 8. are being kept / are kept 9. were damaged 10. was shot

### KEY

Correct the following sentences.

- The room is cleaned every day.
- Gregory is liked by everyone.
- All his money was stolen and he couldn't fly home to London.
- Everything possible is being done to solve the problem in other countries.
- Brian is having the roof repaired finally.
- The hunted killer is believed to be living in Boston.
- Mr Gregory doesn't like to be kept in waiting.
- Gold was discovered in California some years ago.
- The picture was painted by Anabella last year.
- The car needs to be repaired/repairing.