Intermediate Unit 8b(2)

Present perfect simple and continuous, *How long …?*

I'm still at the bus stop. I haven't seen a bus for ages.

Hi! Where are you?

How long have you been waiting?

About 45 minutes.

Oh no!

I missed the ten o'clock bus because of the meeting with my boss.

How long did that take?

About an hour. But she's given me a pay rise – I've never received one before!

That's great! So you can pay for lunch!

Presentation

Present perfect simple or present perfect continuous?

Use the present perfect continuous to talk about how long an action has lasted. The action may or may not be complete.

I've been waiting for a bus for 45 minutes!

Use the present perfect simple to emphasize the completion of an action:

She's given me a pay rise!

You do not use the present perfect continuous to say **how many things** you have done or **how many times** an action has happened. Use the present perfect simple:

Say ***I've written*** *ten emails this morning and it's only 9 o'clock.* (don't say *I've ~~been writing~~ ten emails this morning.*)

Say ***I've changed*** *jobs three times.* (don't say *I've ~~been changing~~ jobs three times.*)

Note you do not usually use stative verbs in the present perfect continuous. Say ***I've known*** *him for years.* (don't say *I've ~~been knowing~~ him for years.*)

We often use the present perfect continuous to talk about the duration of an action, and the present perfect simple to talk about the result of an action: ***I've been working*** *there for a month and* ***I've received*** *a pay rise!*

How long …?

Use questions with *how long …?* to ask about duration with the following tenses:

- **present perfect simple** for a state which started in the past and continues in the present: *How long* ***have*** *you* ***been*** *here?*
- **present perfect continuous** for an action or repeated action which started in the past and continues in the present: *How long* ***have*** *you* ***been working*** *here?*
- **past simple** to ask about a finished state or action in the past: ***How long did*** *you* ***work*** *there?*

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Exercises

1 Match the two halves of the sentences.

1	I've been writing	b	a	money for a holiday.
2	I've written		b	~~emails all morning~~.
3	I've been saving		c	three times this week.
4	I've saved		d	300 euros in the last three months.
5	I've been playing tennis		e	with Sarah and now we're going for a drink.
6	I've played tennis		f	five emails this morning.

2 Look at the verbs in bold. Four of the verbs should be in the present perfect simple. Correct the sentences. Then listen and check.

A: How long [1]**have you been being** interested in science fiction?
B: Since I was a child. I used to read science fiction books all the time.
A: And how long [2]**have you been writing** science fiction stories yourself?
B: For about five years. I wrote my first short story when I was at university.
A: How many books [3]**have you been publishing?**
B: Well, not many. I mainly write short stories for magazines. [4]**I've been writing** more than 200 stories.
A: 200 stories? But that's 40 stories a year! How do you find the time?
B: Well, I used to write at night. But last year I gave up my job and since then [5]**I've been writing** full time.
A: What [6]**have you been working on** recently?
B: Well, for the last six weeks, [7]**I've been working on** a film version of one of my first stories. It's really exciting. It's the first time [8]**someone's been asking me** to do anything for film.

3 Complete the sentences with the present perfect simple or present perfect continuous form of the verbs.

1 We ..... (know) each other since we were children.
2 They ..... (stay) with us for three weeks. I hope they leave soon!
3 He ..... (write) forty novels so far. This new one is his forty-first.
4 The decorators ..... (paint) the house all morning and they still have more to do.
5 I ..... (not/try) curry. Is it as hot as they say it is?
6 The girls ..... (play) three games of chess. Now they want to watch TV.
7 Sue is really good at tennis now, and recently she ..... (play) against some of the best players in the country.
8 Don't worry about being late. I ..... (not/wait) very long.

4 Complete the questions with the correct form of the verbs. Use the present perfect simple, present perfect continuous or the past simple.

1 How long ..... (you / come) to this school?
For the last five years. This is my last year.
2 How long ..... (your journey / take)?
I left at midday and arrived at 3.30. So three and a half hours.
3 How long ..... (they / live) here?
Not long. They moved in last July.
4 How long ..... (you / walk) for?
It was about ten kilometres, but we stopped for a picnic. It took the whole day.
5 How long ..... (she / look) for a new job?
Ever since she left university. She has an interview next week so I hope she gets it.

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