

6

Connecting past and present 2

A Past simple or present perfect?

The past simple is used to describe actions in a completed time period.

The present perfect is used when the time period includes the present.

*I **lived** in Milan many years ago.*

(completed: now I live in another place)

*I **'ve lived** in Milan since 2008.*

(a situation that started in the past and continues in the present: I still live there)

*I **'ve been** to Milan several times.*

(life experience)

*My boss **has agreed** to your proposal.*

(present result of a past action)

Time phrases used with the past simple (unit 3C) refer to a particular point in the past: *yesterday, last month.*

Time phrases used with the present perfect (unit 5C) link the past to the present: *since, never, this month.*

The choice of tense often depends on the situation and where our attention is.

*Good news! We **'ve won** the contract!*

(recent news: the event is present in my mind)

*So, we **won** the contract, and then ...*

(telling a story: the event feels distant in my mind)

B Present simple or present perfect?

The present simple is used for permanent facts and states, and regular habits.

The present perfect makes a connection between past and present.

*I **work** here.*

(a permanent state: I work here every day)

*I **'ve worked** here for two years.*

(I started two years ago and still work here now)

C Present perfect continuous: form

The present perfect continuous is formed with the present perfect of *be*, and the *-ing* form of the verb. Negatives are formed with *not*.

*I **'ve been (haven't been)** waiting here for more than an hour.*

*She **'s been (hasn't been)** waiting here for ages.*

Questions are formed by inverting the subject and *have*.

***Have you** been waiting long?*

***Has she** been waiting long?*

D Present perfect continuous: uses

The present perfect continuous describes an action or situation in progress from the past up to the present.

*Production at this site **has been increasing** steadily since we started here five years ago.*

The present perfect continuous often emphasizes the length of time of the action.

*I **'ve been working on** this report all week.*

The present perfect continuous can be used for repeated actions.

*I **'ve been calling** her all afternoon, but she's always in a meeting.*

The action may be finished or continuing; we only know by the situation.

*You're late! I **'ve been waiting** here for ages!*

(the waiting is finished now)

*I **'ve been waiting** for ages. Where is she?*

(I will continue waiting)

E Present perfect continuous: time expressions

Typical time expressions used with the present perfect continuous include: *all day, for months, for ages, recently, over the last few years, since, for.*

F Present perfect or present perfect continuous?

Sometimes there is no difference in meaning between the present perfect and present perfect continuous.

*I **'ve worked/been working** here for two years.*

The choice of tense often depends on where our attention is. We use the present perfect if our attention is on the present result.

*I **'ve written** the report. Here it is.*

(the finished report is in my mind)

We use the present perfect continuous if our attention is on the action in progress.

*I **'ve been writing** the report. I'm exhausted.*

(the act of writing is in my mind)

If we give details of how many or how much, we do not use a continuous form.

*I **'ve written** three reports this week.*

*I **'ve done** a lot of research on this company.*

See page 243 for an overview of the English verb tense system.

Exercises

Sections A, B 6.1 Underline the correct words.

- 1 Yesterday *I phoned/I've phoned* the bank about our overdraft.
- 2 *I work/I have worked* here since the end of last year.
- 3 *I work/I have worked* from home one day a week.
- 4 I'm enjoying the conference. *I made/I have made* a lot of useful contacts.
- 5 *I saw/I've seen* Hugh Hopper a few days ago – he sends his regards.
- 6 *We went/We have been* to an interesting seminar last week.
- 7 Today *has been/was* really busy – and it's only lunchtime!
- 8 Today *has been/was* really busy. It's 7 pm – I'm going home.
- 9 I'm sorry but Patricia *left/has left* the office an hour ago.
- 10 Patricia? No, she isn't here right now. She *left/has left* the office.

Sections A, B 6.2 Put the verbs in brackets into either the present simple, past simple or present perfect.

- 1 The company is doing very well. Last year sales went up (go up) 15%, and so far this year they have gone up (go up) another 12%.
- 2 We _____ (operate) all over Latin America. Recently we _____ (set up) branches in Peru and Colombia.
- 3 _____ (you/see) my laptop? I'm sure I _____ (leave) it here earlier.
- 4 This _____ (not look) like the right block. Are you sure we _____ (come) to the right address?
- 5 I _____ (never/speak) to him, but I _____ (speak) to his assistant on the phone yesterday.
- 6 I _____ (work) for WorldCom since last year, but now I _____ (want) to change jobs. _____ (you/hear) of anyone taking on new staff?

Sections C, D, F 6.3 In each mini-dialogue put one verb into the present perfect simple and the other into the present perfect continuous. Use contractions where possible.

- 1 A: What's the matter? You look worried!
B: Yes, I am. I 've been looking at (look at) the contract in detail, and I 've noticed (notice) a lot of potential problems.
- 2 A: I _____ (call) Carol all day, but it goes straight to voicemail.
B: I expect she _____ (go) to Head Office.
- 3 A: 'Tosca' is coming to the Opera House. _____ (you see) it?
B: Not yet, but I _____ (look forward) to it for ages.
Shall we go together?
- 4 A: How long _____ (you produce) cars at this site?
B: About four years. We _____ (invest) around twenty million dollars in plant and machinery.



“Oh, and your feelings have been trying to get in touch with you.”

Exercises

Section A 6.4 Put the verbs into the correct form of the past simple or present perfect simple. Use contractions where possible.

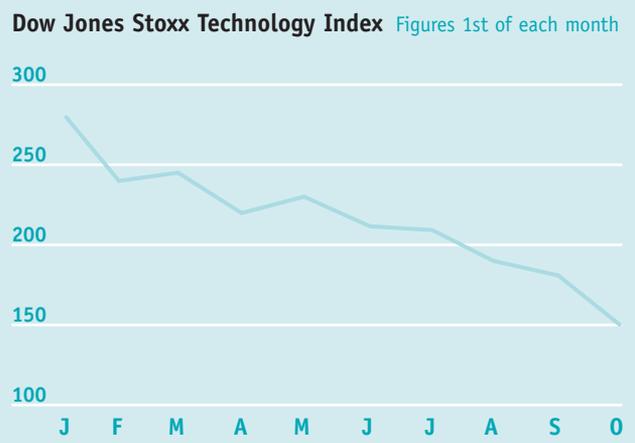
- VICTORIA: Hi, Sue. I ¹ *haven't seen* (not/see) you for ages!
- SUE: Hi, Victoria, nice to see you again. No, you're right, I ² _____ (not/be) in touch with anyone recently.
- VICTORIA: So what have you been up to?
- SUE: You know I ³ _____ (leave) my job in January so that I could go freelance as a graphic designer?
- VICTORIA: Yes, I remember you ⁴ _____ (talk) a lot about that last year.
- SUE: Well, it ⁵ _____ (be) a really difficult year so far. I ⁶ _____ (never/do) anything like this before and it's much harder than I ⁷ _____ (imagine). ⁸ _____ (you/ever/be) self-employed?
- VICTORIA: No, never, although I ⁹ _____ (often/think) about it. So why ¹⁰ _____ (it/be) so difficult?
- SUE: There's a lot of insecurity. At the beginning I ¹¹ _____ (have) two or three good clients. These are people that I ¹² _____ (know) for many years. They're still with me. But apart from that nothing really.
- VICTORIA: What about advertising in the specialist magazines?
- SUE: Yes, I ¹³ _____ (already/do) that. I ¹⁴ _____ (put) an advert in *Design Monthly* a couple of months ago but there were only a few replies. But I have a new website and I'm quite optimistic about using it to generate business. I ¹⁵ _____ (finish) it just last week. It's optimized for search engines so that people can find me more easily. I ¹⁶ _____ (have) quite a few hits already, so things might improve soon.

Section A 6.5 Complete the text about technology stocks by putting the verbs into the correct form of the past simple or present perfect.

MARKET REPORT a rocky road for tech stocks

European investors ¹ *have watched* (watch) US stock markets nervously over the last few months. The problems with US technology and telecomms stocks ² _____ (begin) last March, and since then share prices at companies like Intel, HP and Apple ³ _____ (crash). Over the summer all these giants ⁴ _____ (announce) lower than expected profits, and investors fear that in the current economic climate demand for their products ⁵ _____ (peak). Now it's the turn of European stocks, and on Monday stocks in Germany's SAP and Finland's Nokia ⁶ _____ (fall) sharply. SAP ⁷ _____ (be) down 4%.

But there was some good news for investors yesterday. Capgemini ⁸ _____ (release) figures which showed that this year revenues ⁹ _____ (rise) to €9,100 million, up from €8,700 million last year. In recent years Capgemini ¹⁰ _____ (become) one of the leading players in the global IT services market, alongside IBM, EDS and Accenture. The company ¹¹ _____ (also/lead)



the way in the use of offshoring, often transferring work to countries such as India and Poland. This ¹² _____ (improve) profitability as well as providing a wider range of options in the event of a sudden change in the market.

Tasks

Speaking: listen and repeat

1  **06** You are going to hear eight phrases. Listen and repeat.

Translate

2 Translate these short texts taken from the Internet into your own language. Remember not to translate word for word, but rather to make it sound natural.

The technology-heavy Nasdaq index has been falling for three weeks, and is now 34% lower than its March peak. Shares of companies announcing poor results have fallen by a third or a half after profits warnings.

Washington Post website

Since completing a consolidation phase three years ago, ThyssenKrupp has been following a sustained and profitable course of growth. The company has raised its earnings forecast for the current fiscal year to over €3.2 billion before taxes.

business-magazine.de website

Writing: personalized practice

3 Think about your life in the last year. Write answers to these questions using the past simple, present perfect simple and present perfect continuous.

- 1 How have you tried to keep fit and healthy?
I've joined a health club. I went a few times after joining, but since then I haven't been at all. Also I've been trying to eat more healthy food. I don't really have much time for cooking, but I've learned a few new recipes.

2 How have you spent your money?

3 What have you done to keep up with new ideas in your professional field?

4 Have you been anywhere interesting?

5 What haven't you done that you would like to have done? Why?

Rehearsal for the real world

4 Look again at the dialogue in exercise 6.4 and notice how the speakers use the past simple and the present perfect. Now write a similar dialogue between yourself and a friend or colleague who you meet after not being in contact for some time. Start like this:

Friend (give their name): Hi! I haven't see you for ages!

Me: Hi, nice to see you again.

If you are working in class, read some dialogues aloud.