



- A: Have you seen this article about that fire in the stadium?
- B: Oh, yeah, we've just been talking about that. When did it happen?
- A: It happened a year ago, but they never found the person responsible. Anyway, the police have been looking at the evidence again and they've taken the manager in for questioning.
- B: Really? They've questioned him three or four times already, haven't they?
- A: Yes, and they closed the stadium last night, so there'll be no match on Saturday.

Presentation

Past simple

Use the past simple to talk about finished actions and events in the past when there is a clear reference to a specific time in the past, or when the past time reference is clearly implied or understood:

*The fire happened **a year ago**.*

They never found the person responsible. (The exact time not stated but it's understood it was around the same time as the fire, i.e. a year ago.)

With the past simple, we often use time expressions such as *last week, a year ago, in 2001, yesterday, when I was a child*.

Present perfect

You can use both the present perfect simple and the present perfect continuous to talk about:

- recent past events and news stories:

*The police **have reopened** the case about the fire in the football stadium.*

*We've just **been talking** about the fire at the stadium.*

- a past event or action that has a present or future result:

*The police **have closed** the stadium. (Result: there'll be no match on Saturday.)*

*They've **been looking** at the evidence again. (Result: they've closed the stadium.)*

Use the present perfect simple to talk about a single, complete action: *They've **taken** the manager in for questioning.*

Use the present perfect continuous to talk about an action, or series of actions, that was in progress in the recent past

but is no longer happening: *The kids **have been playing** football.* (They are not playing football now.)

You don't usually use stative verbs in the present perfect continuous.

Say *I've known the manager for several years.* (don't say *I've been knowing the manager for several years.*)

Quantity and duration

Use the present perfect simple to talk about a specific number of times you have done something in the past or the number of things you have produced or made:

*She's **been** to Paris three times in the last year.*

*He's **written** five books.*

*He's **had** several different jobs.*

TIP You often use the present perfect simple with expressions of quantity: *three books, four times, several jobs.*

Use the present perfect continuous to emphasize the duration of an action, or series of actions, in progress recently (we don't always know if the action is complete):

*The police **have been questioning** the manager all morning.*

*I've **been working** at the computer all morning.*

*I've **been having** some strange dreams recently.*

With the present perfect simple, we often use time expressions such as *ever, this year, never, over the past three months, yet, before, already, since I was a child*.

With the present perfect continuous, we often use time expressions such as *all morning, this week, over the last few months*.

Exercises

1 Choose the best response or ending.

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| <p>1 Why did he run away?
 a Because he saw a ghost.
 b Because he has been seeing a ghost.</p> <p>2 Are they still working hard on the house?
 a No, they've just finished.
 b No, they've just been finishing.</p> <p>3 What happened when they heard the news?
 a They've decided to have a party.
 b They decided to have a party.</p> | <p>4 He's just rung and ...
 a he's coming now.
 b he's been coming.</p> <p>5 Where have you been living all this time?
 a I stayed with an old friend.
 b With an old friend, but I've just found a place of my own.</p> |
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2 Choose the correct form of the verbs.

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| <p>1 A: Why isn't Sam here?
 B: His car's <u>broken</u> / <i>been breaking</i> down.</p> <p>2 A: Why is the office such a mess?
 B: We've <i>looked</i> / <i>been looking</i> for something.</p> <p>3 A: What's the smell?
 B: I've <i>cooked</i> / <i>been cooking</i>.</p> | <p>4 A: Are you going to buy a cake for Dad?
 B: No, Sue's <i>baked</i> / <i>been baking</i> one already.</p> <p>5 A: I need a cup of tea. I'm exhausted! I've <i>helped</i> / <i>been helping</i> Sue all day.
 B: Here you are. Put your feet up and relax.</p> <p>6 A: Have you <i>finished</i> / <i>been finishing</i>?
 B: Yes, we have. We can take it easy now.</p> |
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3 Complete the conversation using the present perfect simple or present perfect continuous form of the verbs in brackets. Then listen and check.

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| <p>A: ¹ _____ (you/hear) the news? Bill
 ² _____ (just/resign).</p> <p>B: No! You're kidding! Why?</p> <p>A: Well, he ³ _____ (not get on) with the boss recently.</p> <p>B: Yes, I noticed they ⁴ _____ (argue) quite a lot recently.</p> | <p>A: Yes, they ⁵ _____ (have) two really big arguments in the last week. And he ⁶ _____ (decide) that enough is enough. He ⁷ _____ (quit) his job. He ⁸ _____ (already/start) looking for a new one.</p> <p>B: Well, good luck to him, I say.</p> |
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4 Complete the sentences with the words in the box.

all weekend	already	last year	never	yet
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| <p>1 A: Have you seen the Grand Canyon _____ ?
 B: No. We're going there tomorrow.</p> <p>2 A: My children have _____ tried sushi.
 B: I think they should. They'll love it.</p> <p>3 Hello. I've _____ left you a message on your phone. Did you get it?</p> | <p>4 I've been working on this project _____ . I can't wait to hand it in tomorrow morning!</p> <p>5 We didn't have a holiday _____ and I don't know if we'll get one this year either.</p> |
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