

Present and present perfect

Present simple and present continuous

We use the present simple for permanent situations (1) and things that are generally true (2).

- 1 Giraffes **live** in Africa. They **have** very long legs and necks. They **feed** on acacia leaves.
- 2 It **rains** more in winter. • Birds **don't sing** at night. • **Do** women **live** longer than men?

We also use the present simple for habits (3), things that happen regularly (4), with verbs that describe current states (5) and in informal reports or instructions (6).

- 3 I **bite** my nails. • She **smokes** cigars. • **Does** he usually **wear** white socks with black shoes?
- 4 They **play** bingo on Monday nights. • Her parents **go** to Majorca every summer.
- 5 She **loves** chocolate. • They **don't believe** us. • He **owns** his flat. (NOT ~~He is owning his flat.~~)
- 6 It **says** here the strike is over. • Baker **passes** to Cook who **shoots**. • You **go** to the end and **turn** left.

When we perform an action by speaking, for example when we promise to do something, we usually use the present simple, not the present continuous.

- 7 I **accept** their decision. • I **promise** to be more careful. (NOT ~~I'm promising to be more careful.~~)

Other verbs used like this include: admit, apologize, bet, deny, insist, regret

We use the present continuous for actions in progress or to talk about being in the middle of an activity.

- 8 Hi. I'm **calling** to let you know I'm **coming**, but it's **snowing** and the traffic **is moving** slowly.

We can describe current situations as permanent with the present simple (9) or as temporary with the present continuous (10).

- 9 My brother Alan **lives** in London and **works** for a magazine. He **writes** about economics.
- 10 My sister Fiona **is living** with Alan just now. She **isn't working** yet. She's **looking** for a job.

We can use *be* and *have* in the present simple for a typical situation or state (11) and in the present continuous for a temporary or special situation (12).

- 11 Wendy's normally a quiet person. She **has** a gentle voice. (NOT ~~She's having a gentle voice.~~)
- 12 Wendy's **being** wild tonight. She's **having** a graduation party. (NOT ~~She has a party.~~)

Present perfect and present perfect continuous

We use the present perfect to talk about or describe an action or situation started in the past which connects to the present (13), when we mean 'at any point up to now' (14) and with state verbs (15).

- 13 How long **have** you **worked** here? ~ I've **worked** here since 1997. (NOT ~~I work here since 1997.~~)
- 14 This is the best coffee I **have** ever **tasted**. • I **haven't been** to an opera, but I've **seen** one on TV.
- 15 I **have known** Tony for about five years. (NOT ~~I know him for five years. / I've been knowing him for five years.~~)

We use the present perfect continuous when we talk about an activity in progress up to the present (16) and to ask about or describe actions which go on over a period of time up to the present (17).

- 16 They've **been repairing** our street and it's **been causing** a lot of traffic problems.
- 17 **Have** you **been waiting** long? ~ I've **been sitting** here for an hour. (NOT ~~Are you waiting long?~~)

We use the present perfect continuous to describe something as if it is a continuous action up to the present (18) and the present perfect to describe it as a series of separate actions (19).

- 18 He's **been calling** for you. • It **has been raining** a lot recently. (NOT ~~It's raining a lot recently.~~)
- 19 He **has called** four times and he **has asked** for you each time. (NOT ~~He has been calling four times.~~)

We can describe an action as a process going on from earlier up to the present (present perfect continuous) (20) or as the present result of an earlier action (present perfect) (21).

- 20 We've **been making** chicken soup. That's why the kitchen is hot and steamy.
- 21 We've **made** chicken soup. That's what everyone is eating. Would you like some?

4 Complete each paragraph with one set of verbs, using the present simple or present continuous.

know / look / not be / repair / use be / be / have / say / tell be / live / look / move / resemble

- A My computer (1) very irritating right now. Every time I (2) it to save something, it (3) it (4) no space in its memory, which (5) ridiculous.
- B Whales and dolphins (6) like fish, but they (7) mammals that (8) in the ocean and (9) through water in ways that (10) the movements of a dog rather than those of a shark.
- C Man: Excuse me. I (11) for Mrs Adamson, but she (12) in her usual classroom. (13) you where she is?
 Woman: Oh, they (14) her classroom ceiling this week so she (15) the library as her classroom.

5 Using a dictionary if necessary, complete these sentences with the nouns and the verbs in the present perfect.

also-ran	hat-trick	buy	not come	say	train
has-been	no-show	hear	not finish	take	win

- Colin the race for the second year in a row and he that he will come back and try to make it a next year.
- An '.....' is an informal expression for a person or a horse that part in a competition or a race, but first, second or third.
- Wilson says he people describe him negatively as a '.....'; but he hard this year to prove that he's still one of the best.
- A '.....' is an informal expression for someone who a ticket for an event, a journey, etc., but who to the event.

6 Choose an answer (a–d) for each question (1–4) and add these verbs in the present perfect or the present perfect continuous.

be complete do know read show swim

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1 How long she and Mark each other? (...) | a Yes, he it for the past hour. |
| 2 Why is your hair all wet? (...) | b I just |
| 3 you an application form? (...) | c They friends since school. |
| 4 you Keith the report yet? (...) | d Yes, I already that. |

7 Editing. Correct the mistakes in this text.

My neighbour is called Jeanine. She ^{comes}~~is coming~~ from Belgium. She is living here since 1995 and she says she has been going back to visit her family in Belgium only once. She's having an accent that is the same as people who are coming from France, but I never ask her if she is speaking French. She is really liking to go to the theatre and she is inviting me to go with her one Saturday. In the short time I am knowing her, we become good friends.