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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### Present perfect with 'for' & 'since'



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*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Neil**

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Neil.

**Sophie**

And me, Sophie. Hello.

**Neil**

In this programme, we're going to show you how to use the words **for** and **since** with the present perfect tense.

**Sophie**

That's right and there'll be a quiz at the end of the show, so listen carefully!

**Neil**

Let's get started. Catherine here has got two sentences for us – but: which one uses present perfect?

**Catherine**

I've worked at the BBC for 8 years.

I worked at the BBC for 8 years.

**Neil**

Thank you, Catherine. And the first sentence – **I've worked at the BBC for 8 years** is in the present perfect tense. It means that Catherine started work at the BBC 8 years ago and still works at the BBC now.

**Sophie**

The second sentence is in the past simple, and the meaning is different. *I worked at the BBC for 8 years* means the speaker worked for the BBC in the past, but they don't work there now. Let's hear those again.

**Catherine**

I've worked at the BBC for 8 years.

I worked at the BBC for 8 years.

**Sophie**

So: the present perfect helps us talk about situations that started in the past and are still happening now. We make the present perfect tense with the **subject plus have or has -**

**Neil**

...Or **haven't** or **hasn't** –

**Sophie**

Yes: **subject plus have, has, haven't or hasn't**, plus the **past participle** form of the verb. Some more examples please Catherine?

**Catherine**

Alisha has lived in Paris since 1996.

I've known Alex for twenty years.

**Neil**

So these situations are still happening – Alisha still lives in Paris...

**Sophie**

...and Catherine and Alex are still friends.

**Neil**

And both examples have a time expression. Here's the first one again.

**Catherine**

Alisha has lived in Paris **since 1996**.

**Sophie**

The word **since** gives the exact point in the past when the situation started - a particular year, for example: **since 1996**.

**Neil**

...and the point in the past that we use with **since** could be a day, a month, a season or a time of day. Catherine.

**Catherine**

They've been married **since March**.

I've been ill **since last Friday**.

Faruk has drunk three cups of coffee **since 2 o'clock**.

**Sophie**

The point in the past can also be a situation or event.

**Catherine**

I haven't eaten anything **since I got up**.  
I've known Alex **since primary school**.

**Neil**

So: that's **since** to refer to a point in time when a situation started.

**Sophie**

Now let's look at **for**. We use **for** with the present perfect tense to say how long a situation has lasted.

**Catherine**

I've known Alex for twenty years.

**Sophie**

...**for** twenty years. Catherine met Alex twenty years ago, and they still know each other now. So it's **present perfect**, plus **for**, plus a **length of time**.

**Catherine**

I've known Alex for twenty years.

**Sophie**

The length of time could be: **for six months, for a week, for two minutes, for ten seconds...**

**Neil**

**For fifty years, for ten thousand years!**

**IDENT**

You're listening to BBC Learning English.com.

**Neil**

And we're talking about the present perfect tense with **for** and **since**. Did you know Sophie, I've worked for the BBC for 13 years.

**Sophie**

Really?

**Neil**

Yes I have. And I haven't had a day off sick since I started.

**Sophie**

Really?

**Neil**

No, not really. How long have you worked at the BBC, Sophie?

**Sophie**

Well, Neil, I've done bits and bobs for about a year.

**Neil**

You can also ask this question with the present perfect continuous tense, like this:

**Catherine**

How long **have you been working** at the BBC?

**Neil**

It's very similar to the present perfect simple tense, and is common when we're asking about temporary or unfinished situations and activities.

**Sophie**

And now, it's quiz time. Neil will give the answers. Number 1. Which sentence is correct?

a) I've lived here since two years. Or b) I've lived here for two years.

**Neil**

It's b) I've lived here for two years.

**Sophie**

Number 2: a) Mika hasn't spoken to Jackie for they went on holiday. b) Mika hasn't spoken to Jackie since they went on holiday.

**Neil**

It's b) Mika hasn't spoken to Jackie since they went on holiday.

**Sophie**

...and number 3: a) You have been listening to 6 Minute Grammar for the last 6 minutes b) You're listening to 6 Minute Grammar for the last 6 minutes.

**Neil**

It's a) You have been listening to 6 Minute Grammar for the last 6 minutes - because you are still listening...

**Sophie**

...we hope!

**Neil**

There's lots more about this on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for some more 6 Minute Grammar.

**All**

Bye.