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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### Present perfect continuous



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

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#### Neil

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

#### Catherine

And me, Catherine.

#### Neil

Today we're talking about the present perfect continuous tense.

#### Catherine

We'll remind you when to use it and how to form it...

#### Neil

We'll also look at using it with the words **just** and **already** and other adverbs.

#### Catherine

And we'll finish with a quiz. So let's kick things off with an example of the present perfect continuous, read for us by Finn.

#### Finn

I've been reading that book you lent me last weekend... it's great!

#### Catherine

Thanks Finn. So **I've been reading...** is an action that started in the past and is continuing in the present: Finn is still reading that book. Here's another example:

#### Finn

It's been raining since 9 o'clock this morning.

#### Neil

It has! It started raining in the morning, continued raining and it's still raining now.

#### Catherine

We can also use the present perfect continuous for actions that have recently finished. An example, please Finn:

**Finn**

I've got paint all over my clothes because I've been decorating the living room.

**Neil**

Ah, so Finn's got paint all over his clothes, and that's the evidence he was painting but now he's finished. Another example please, Finn.

**Finn**

Joe! Where have you been? I've been trying to get hold of you... I've got some bad news.

**Catherine**

So, Finn has finally managed to find Joe. The action of looking for Joe has finished but Finn was looking right up until the moment he found him.

**Neil**

To say how long an action has been happening for, we can add a time expression.

**Finn**

Jack has got a big concert tomorrow. He's been rehearsing **all day**.  
We've been going to the same hotel **for the last ten years**.

**Neil**

Earlier, Finn said: it has been raining **since 9 o'clock this morning**.

**Catherine**

**For three hours, for the last ten years and since 9 o'clock this morning** tell us how long the activity has been happening.

**Neil**

The present perfect continuous is often used with the words **already** and **just**.

**Catherine**

That's right, we can use **already** if an action hasn't finished, and we want to emphasise how long it's been happening. Finn:

**Finn**

She's **already** been sleeping for three hours.  
This chicken has **already** been cooking for two hours.

**Catherine**

We use **just** when the action has already finished - and we want to emphasise how recently it finished.

**Finn**

There's Yasemin – I've **just** been talking to her husband on the phone!

**Catherine**

We can also use **recently** or **lately** to say that a situation or action finished only a short while ago, but they are a bit further back in time than **just**. So, Neil, have you been doing anything special recently...

**Neil**

Well, I've been trying to lose a bit of weight recently, so I've been going to the gym after work. How about you, Catherine...?

**Catherine**

Well, I'm afraid I haven't been going to the gym because I've been feeling rather tired lately and I haven't been sleeping very well.

**Neil**

You've been working too hard! Now, we form the present perfect continuous with the **subject** plus **have** or **has** and the **present participle** of the main verb. Here are some examples:

**Finn**

Jack has been working hard.  
It's been raining ...  
I've been reading that book ...

**Catherine**

And for negatives, it's **subject** plus **haven't** or **hasn't** and the **present participle**.

**Finn**

I haven't been sleeping very well.

**Catherine**

We usually put **just** and **already** between **have** or **has** and the **past participle**. So it's She's **already** been sleeping for three hours.

**Neil**

...and I've **just** been talking to her husband ....

**Catherine**

But time expressions usually go after the main verb. So it's Jack's been studying **all day**.

**Neil**

And don't forget to use short forms like **I've... It's... haven't... hasn't** with the present perfect continuous.

## IDENT

6 Minute Grammar from the BBC.

### Catherine

And we're talking about the present perfect continuous.

### Neil

We use it to talk about an activity that started in the past and is continuing now or has recently finished.

### Catherine

And we often use it with the adverbs **just** and **already**, and with other time expressions like **recently** and **lately**.

### Neil

It's time for our quiz. Number one. Which is correct? The chicken only needs another fifteen minutes. It's a) ...already been cooking for two hours, or b) It's just been cooking for two hours.

### Catherine

It's a) because the chicken is still cooking.

### Neil

That's correct. Number 2. a) Where have you been? I wait for you for half an hour. Or b) Where have you been? I've been waiting for you for half an hour.

### Catherine

It's b) because you use the present perfect continuous to say how long you have been doing an action.

### Neil

Finally, number 3. a) You've been listening just to 6 Minute Grammar. b) You've just been listening to 6 Minute Grammar.

### Catherine

It's b) because **just** goes between the auxiliary **have** and **been**.

### Neil

Correct and it's the end of the show. There's lots more about this on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar soon.

### Both

Bye.