

### Contrast: present perfect simple versus present perfect continuous

#### A With no time reference:

**I've been reading that book.**

(Describes the activity. The book is not finished.)

**I've read that book.**

(Describes the completion of an event. The book is finished.)

**She's been running.**

(Describes the activity of running.)

**She's run three miles.**

(This describes the completion of the three miles. We cannot say ~~She's been running three miles.~~)

**He's written a book about windsurfing.**

(Completed at an unspecified time in the past.)

**He's been writing a book about windsurfing.**

(Describes his recent activity.)

#### B With a time reference:

We can use both the *present perfect simple* and the *present perfect continuous* to describe an activity that started in the past and continues up to the present and possibly into the future.

**They've been studying English for three years.**

(Both these sentences are correct. The present perfect continuous puts more emphasis on the continuity of the activity.)

We can use the *present perfect simple* and the *present perfect continuous* with **lately** and **recently**.

**I've been working really hard lately.**

(The activity of working is important.)

**I've done a lot of work lately.**

(The completion of a lot of work is important.)

#### 11a Put the verbs in brackets into the present perfect simple or present perfect continuous.

Tim Bryant, a magazine journalist, is interviewing Margaret Rodwell, the founder of a successful company.

TB: So why do you think your company <sup>1</sup>has been (be) so successful?

MR: Well, our products <sup>2</sup>.... (fill) a large gap in the market and I think one of the most important things is that we <sup>3</sup>.... (always listen) to our clients and we <sup>4</sup>.... (act) on their comments and suggestions.

TB: And what's a typical day for you?

MR: Well, take today for example. I <sup>5</sup>.... (interview) candidates for a marketing executive post.

TB: And how many <sup>6</sup>.... (you/interview)?

MR: Er, I <sup>7</sup>.... (interview) four so far. And I <sup>8</sup>.... (talk) to clients on the phone on and off all day. I seem to spend a lot of time on the phone. I <sup>9</sup>.... (discuss) some new ideas with them for the transportation and delivery of our products.

TB: Mm, it sounds like a very busy day.

MR: Oh, that's only part of it. I <sup>10</sup>.... (have) two meetings, one with Union representatives and one with departmental heads. And I <sup>11</sup>.... (also work) on a proposal for a new marketing strategy.

TB: And it's not two o'clock yet!

MR: No, but of course I <sup>12</sup>.... (be) here since seven o'clock this morning.

TB: Gosh. And, I hope you don't mind my mentioning this Ms Rodwell, but some rumours <sup>13</sup>.... (circulate) about your possible engagement to Mr Grimaldi, the banker.

MR: No, there will be no engagement, though it's true that Mr Grimaldi and I <sup>14</sup>.... (see) each other. That's no secret.

TB: When you get the time, I suppose. And is it also true that you <sup>15</sup>.... (learn) Russian with a view to introducing your products there?

MR: Yes, I have, but I <sup>16</sup>.... (not learn) much yet; there's still a long way for me to go.

#### 11b Put the verbs in brackets into the present perfect simple or present perfect continuous.

1 A: You look hot. What <sup>1</sup>have you been doing? (you/do)?

B: I <sup>2</sup>.... (run).

A: Running! In this heat? How far <sup>3</sup>.... (you/run)?

B: About four miles.

2 A: What's the problem? You look a bit preoccupied.

B: Yes, I <sup>4</sup>.... (think) about Helen.

A: Why? Is there something wrong with her?

B: Well, she <sup>5</sup>.... (act) so strangely lately.

A: In what way?

B: Well, some days when she arrives at work, I know that she <sup>6</sup>.... (cry). And she <sup>7</sup>.... (make) private calls when we're all out at lunch. I just think that something's going on.

A: <sup>8</sup>.... (you/talk) to her about it yet?

B: Yes, a few times, and each time she <sup>9</sup>.... (say) that there's nothing wrong, but I'm not so sure.

3 A: Where <sup>10</sup>.... (you/be), Simon?

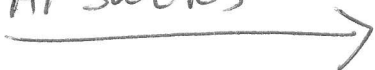
B: I <sup>11</sup>.... (talk) to Mark on the phone. He says he <sup>12</sup>.... (try) to phone us all day.

A: Well I <sup>13</sup>.... (be) in most of the day but I <sup>14</sup>.... (not hear) the phone. That's strange. But anyway, he <sup>15</sup>.... (have) a phone call from Jackie's mother and Jackie <sup>16</sup>.... (be) in some kind of accident. It's nothing very serious but she's got to stay in hospital overnight.

A: Oh dear. <sup>17</sup>.... (she/break) any bones?

B: I'm not quite sure how badly she <sup>18</sup>.... (be hurt) but I think we should go and see her tonight.

ANSWERS



- 11a 1. has been 2. have filled 3. have always listened 4. have acted  
5. have been interviewing 6. have you interviewed 7. have interviewed  
8. have been talking 9. have been discussing 10. have had 11. have  
also been working 12. have been 13. have been circulating 14. have  
been seeing 15. have been learning 16. haven't learnt
- 11b 1. have you been doing 2. 've been running 3. have you run  
4. 've been thinking 5. 's been acting 6. 's been crying  
7. 's been making 8. Have you talked 9. 's said 10. have you been  
11. 've been talking 12. 's been trying 13. 've been 14. haven't heard  
15. 's had 16. 's been 17. Has she broken  
18. 's been hurt