



# Learn English Through Stories

T Series

Upper - Intermediate

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## Perfect Tenses 4 by K S Sandhu

### A Busy Weekend in the Neighbourhood

Last weekend, something unusual happened in our quiet street. Everyone looked different, and people were talking about their recent activities. It all started on Saturday morning when I met my neighbours at the local café.

First, I saw Lucy. She was looking very tanned. She explained that she has been using a sun bed every day for two weeks because she wanted a nice colour before her holiday. "But now my skin feels dry," she laughed.

Then Mike arrived. He was rubbing his ears because they hurt. "I have been listening to loud music all week while working on my new playlist," he said with a shy smile. "My headphones are too powerful!"

John joined us next. He had clearly put on a lot of weight. "I have been eating too many desserts since my mother started baking again," he admitted. "Her chocolate cakes are irresistible!"

Debbie looked confident. She expected to get an A in her important English test. "I have been studying very hard every evening for the last month," she told us proudly. "I want to improve my grammar, especially the perfect tenses!"

Suddenly, we noticed Marcus was not there. Someone said he was at the dentist and needed three fillings. "He hasn't been brushing his teeth properly," whispered Lucy. "He always forgets in the evening."

Later in the afternoon, another Lucy (our running friend) passed by. She was sweating and her legs ached badly. "I have been running a marathon this morning for charity," she said, breathing heavily. "It was exhausting but wonderful!"

Alec walked past with big muscles showing under his T-shirt. "I have been lifting weights at the gym almost every day this year," he explained. "It makes me feel strong and healthy."

Clare looked very tired when she arrived. "I haven't been sleeping very well recently," she said. "Work has been stressful, and I have been worrying too much at night."

Finally, Banta came to the café. He still doesn't speak much English, but he smiled a lot. "I haven't been living in the UK for long," he said slowly. "Only six months, but I have been practising every day."

While we were chatting, an older lady named Mrs Thompson joined us. She had exciting news. "You won't believe this, but I have been learning to drive!" she exclaimed. "My husband used to do all the driving, but after he died, I really needed to learn. I have been having lessons for six months now at the local driving school. The instructors are friendly, but it is rather expensive – I have already spent over £500!"

She continued: "After the first ten lessons, I took my test. It was a disaster! Of course, I didn't pass. Since then, I have been trying to improve, but it isn't easy at my age. I find it difficult to change gears smoothly because of my bad leg. For the last ten years, I have been suffering from arthritis, which makes my leg stiff. I have been taking special vitamins which seem to help."

Her instructor suggested an automatic car, but Mrs Thompson was adamant – she preferred manual ones, although she had never driven an automatic before. "Perhaps I should give it a try," she said with a determined smile.

By the end of the weekend, everyone felt closer. We realised how our recent habits had changed our appearance and energy. The Present Perfect Continuous helped us explain exactly what we had been doing and why we felt the way we did now.

### **Questions:**

Question 1: Why is Lucy looking very tanned?

Question 2: What has been happening to Mike's ears and why?

Question 3: Why has John put on a lot of weight?

Question 4: What does Debbie expect to get in her test, and why?

Question 5: Where is Marcus and why does he need three fillings?

Question 6: Why are Lucy's legs aching?

Question 7: Why has Alec got big muscles?

Question 8: Why is Clare feeling tired?

Question 9: Why doesn't Banta speak much English yet?

Question 10: What has Mrs Thompson been doing for six months, and what problem does she have with her leg?

**Answers:**

Answer 1: Lucy is looking very tanned because she has been using a sun bed.

Answer 2: Mike's ears hurt because he has been listening to loud music.

Answer 3: John has put on a lot of weight because he has been eating too many desserts.

Answer 4: Debbie expects to get an A in the test because she has been studying very hard.

Answer 5: Marcus is at the dentist because he needs three fillings. He hasn't been brushing his teeth properly.

Answer 6: Lucy's legs are aching because she has been running a marathon.

Answer 7: Alec has got big muscles because he has been lifting weights at the gym.

Answer 8: Clare is feeling tired because she hasn't been sleeping very well recently.

Answer 9: Banta still doesn't speak much English because he hasn't been living in the UK for long.

Answer 10: Mrs Thompson has been learning to drive for six months. She has been suffering from arthritis, which makes her leg stiff.

## 39 Present perfect continuous



### 1 Form

We form the present perfect continuous with *have + been + the -ing form of the verb*:

<b>POSITIVE</b>	<i>I have ('ve) been waiting. He has ('s) been washing the car. They have ('ve) been cooking.</i>
<b>NEGATIVE</b>	<i>I have not (haven't) been waiting. He has not (hasn't) been washing the car. We have not (haven't) been cooking.</i>
<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<i>Have you been waiting? (Yes, I have.) Has he been washing the car? (No, he hasn't.) What have you been doing?</i>

### Pronunciation > 1.19

### 2 Actions/situations up to the present

We use the present perfect continuous to talk about actions or situations that started in the past and are still continuing now:

*We've been waiting to hear from them. Clare's been living with her cousins.*


We often use *for* or *since* to answer the question *How long?*:

*We've been waiting for about an hour. I've been working since three o'clock.*

We can also use the present perfect continuous if the action or situation finishes at the time of speaking:


*I've been waiting in this queue for an hour! (... but now I've reached the ticket office.)*

*Clive's been driving all morning. (... but now he's arrived.)*

 We use the present perfect, NOT the present perfect continuous, when we say how many times we have done something, or how much we have done:

*X I've been washing the car twice this week. ✓ I've washed the car twice this week.*

*X We've been having three lessons so far. ✓ We've had three lessons so far.*

 We don't usually use the present perfect continuous with *always*, *already* and *yet*:

*X I haven't been washing the car yet. ✓ I haven't washed the car yet.*

### 3 Recent continuous actions with present results

We often use the present perfect continuous to talk about an activity in the recent past:

*'I haven't seen you in the office recently.' 'I know. I've been working at home.'*


We often use this form to explain a present situation or result; it gives the cause:

*'Your clothes are all wet!' 'I know. I've been washing the car.'*

*'Have you lost weight?' 'Yes, I've been going to the gym a lot.'*

Sometimes the action is not complete:

*I've been reading 'War and Peace' but I'm only half way through it.*

 We use the present perfect simple or continuous, NOT the present simple or continuous, for a situation that is still continuing:

*X I live here for five months. ✓ I've lived here for five months.*

*X I am living here for five months. ✓ I've been living here for five months.*

## Practice

- 1 Write sentences, using the words below and the present perfect continuous form of the verbs. Then write true answers for questions 5 and 6. **3.13** Listen and check.

0	We / wait / for ages	<i>We've been waiting for ages.</i>
00	How long / you / wait ?	<i>How long have you been waiting?</i>
1	David / watch TV / all afternoon	.....
2	What / he / do ?	.....
3	Elizabeth / not work / this week	.....
4	My grandparents / not feel well / recently	.....
5	How long / you / study English ?	.....
		.....
6	How long / you use / this book ?	.....
		.....

- 2 Match the situations A-I with the explanations 1-8. Then complete the explanations with suitable verbs from the box. Use the present perfect continuous.

eat lift listen not brush ~~not live~~ not sleep run study use

A	John's put on a lot of weight.	F	Alec's got big muscles.
B	Aleesha's sweating and her legs ache.	G	Marianne's looking very tanned.
C	Mike's ears hurt.	H	Debbie expects to get an A in the test.
D	Clare's feeling tired.	I	Marcus is at the dentist. He needs three fillings.
E	<del>Rashid still doesn't speak much English.</del>		
0	He <i>hasn't been living</i> in the UK for long.	<i>E</i>	.....
1	She ..... a sun bed.	.....	.....
2	He ..... to loud music.	.....	.....
3	He ..... too many desserts.	.....	.....
4	She ..... very hard.	.....	.....
5	He ..... his teeth properly.	.....	.....
6	She ..... a marathon.	.....	.....
7	He ..... weights at the gym.	.....	.....
8	She ..... very well recently.	.....	.....

- 3 **GRAMMAR IN USE** Choose the correct words in *italics*.

**3.14** Listen and check.

“You won't believe this but (0) *I've* / *I'm* been learning to drive! I suppose it's a bit late to learn to drive at my age, but my husband used to do all the driving. So when he died I really needed to learn. In fact I've really been (1) *enjoyed* / *enjoying* it. I've (2) *had* / *been having* lessons for six months now. I suppose I've (3) *been having* / *had* about thirty lessons so far. I've (4) *gone* / *been going* to the local driving school. The instructors are very friendly and it's quite close to my house. But it's rather expensive. I've already (5) *spent* / *been spending* over £500! After the first ten lessons I (6) *took* / *have been taking* my first test. It was a disaster! Of course, I didn't pass. Since then I've been (7) *tried* / *trying* to improve, but it isn't easy at my age. I find it's very difficult to change gears smoothly because of my bad leg – for the last ten years I (8) *am* / *'ve been* suffering from arthritis, which makes my leg stiff. I've (9) *taken* / *been taking* some special vitamins which seem to help – I take two each day. My instructor says I should use an automatic car, but I think I prefer manual ones. Although in fact I've never (10) *driven* / *been driving* an automatic car, so perhaps I should give it a try ...”



## Answers

### UNIT 39

- 1 1 David has been watching TV all afternoon.
- 2 What has he been doing?
- 3 Elizabeth hasn't been working this week.
- 4 My grandparents have not/haven't been feeling well recently.
- 5 How long have you been studying English?
- 6 How long have you been using this book?

#### Model answers

- 5 *I've been studying English for two years.*
  - 6 *I've been using this book since January.*
- 2 1 G (She)'s been using 2 C (He)'s been listening 3 A (He)'s been eating 4 H (She)'s been studying 5 I (He) hasn't been brushing 6 B (She)'s been running 7 F (He)'s been lifting 8 D (She) hasn't been sleeping
- 3 1 enjoying 2 been having 3 had 4 been going 5 spent 6 took 7 trying 8 've been 9 been taking 10 driven