



Learn English Through Stories

T Series

Upper - Intermediate

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Perfect Tenses 5 by K S Sandhu

The Unexpected Visitor

Emma felt exhausted when she arrived home after work. She had been working long hours all week, and her boss had given her many difficult tasks. As she opened the door, she noticed something strange. The living room looked different. Someone had been cleaning the house while she was away.

Her neighbour, Mrs Patel, knocked on the door a few minutes later. "Have you seen the flowers on your table?" she asked with a smile. "I've just brought them for you. I've been watering your plants every day because you've been so busy recently."

Emma was surprised. "Thank you so much," she said. "I haven't had time to look after the flat. I've been working late every evening, and I've hardly slept this week."

Mrs Patel sat down and continued, "Your brother called earlier. He's been trying to reach you for days, but you never answer your phone. He said he has been living in Australia for the last two years and he has just decided to visit England next month."

Emma smiled. She hadn't seen her brother for a long time. "That's wonderful news," she replied. "I've missed him so much. I've often thought about visiting him, but I've never found the time."

While they were talking, the phone rang. It was Emma's best friend, Sarah. "Have you heard the news?" Sarah asked excitedly. "I've just finished my university course. I've been studying medicine for five years, and I've finally passed all my exams!"

"Congratulations!" said Emma. "You've been working so hard. I'm really proud of you."

Sarah laughed. "Thanks. Actually, I've been planning a small celebration party this weekend. I've already invited ten people, and I've been cooking all afternoon. The kitchen is a mess because I've been trying new recipes."

Emma looked around her own flat. "My flat is also a mess," she admitted. "I've been meaning to tidy it for weeks, but I haven't started yet. I've been too tired after work."

Suddenly, there was another knock at the door. It was Tom, Emma's colleague. He looked happy. "I've just bought a new car," he said. "I've been saving money for two years, and I've finally done it!"

The three friends started chatting. Mrs Patel had been helping in the neighbourhood for many years, Sarah had been studying hard, and Tom had been saving carefully. Emma realised that everyone around her had been doing important things while she had been working non-stop.

Later that evening, after everyone had left, Emma sat quietly. She had been thinking about her life. She hadn't taken a holiday for more than a year. "I've been working too much," she said to herself. "It's time to change."

She picked up her phone and booked a short trip to the countryside. For the first time in months, she felt relaxed and hopeful.

The unexpected visitor that day – Mrs Patel with her flowers – reminded Emma that small acts of kindness can make a big difference. Life had been busy, but now she understood the importance of balance.

Questions:

Question 1: Why does Emma feel exhausted when she arrives home?

Question 2: What has Mrs Patel been doing every day while Emma has been busy?

Question 3: Why hasn't Emma answered her brother's calls?

Question 4: Where has Emma's brother been living for the last two years?

Question 5: What good news does Sarah share with Emma on the phone?

Question 6: How long has Sarah been studying medicine?

Question 7: What has Tom just bought, and how long has he been saving for it?

Question 8: Why is Emma's flat a mess?

Question 9: What does Emma decide to do at the end of the story?

Question 10: What does the story teach Emma about life?

Answers:

Answer 1: Emma feels exhausted because she has been working long hours all week.

Answer 2: Mrs Patel has been watering Emma's plants every day.

Answer 3: Emma hasn't answered her brother's calls because she has been working late every evening and has hardly slept.

Answer 4: Emma's brother has been living in Australia for the last two years.

Answer 5: Sarah has just finished her university course and has finally passed all her exams.

Answer 6: Sarah has been studying medicine for five years.

Answer 7: Tom has just bought a new car, and he has been saving money for it for two years.


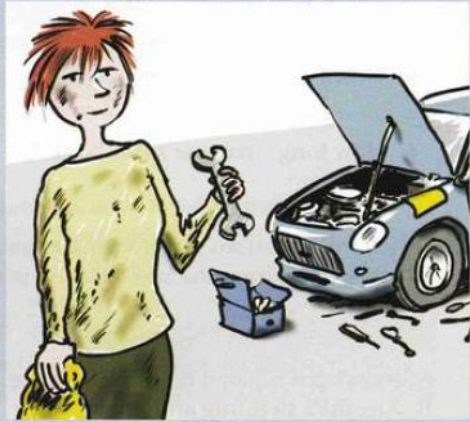
Answer 8: Emma's flat is a mess because she has been working too much and hasn't had time to tidy it.

Answer 9: Emma decides to book a short trip to the countryside.

Answer 10: The story teaches Emma that small acts of kindness can make a big difference and that she needs more balance in her life.

40 Present perfect simple or continuous?

1 Differences in use

PRESENT PERFECT SIMPLE	PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS
An action that is completed: <i>I've driven an automatic car before.</i>	An activity that is still continuing, or has just ended: <i>I've been driving since nine o'clock.</i>
emphasis on the result of a past action:	emphasis on the cause of a present result:
	
<i>The mechanic has repaired the car.</i> (It's ready for the customer now.)	Why is Caroline dirty? <i>She's been repairing the car.</i>
To answer the questions 'how much?' or 'how many?': <i>We've played six games.</i> <i>Karl has driven 200 miles.</i>	To answer the question 'how long?': <i>We've been playing for three hours.</i> <i>Karl's been driving since nine o'clock.</i>
Time expressions: <i>always, recently, before, ever, already, just, still, yet, for and since</i> <i>I've always lived in that flat.</i> <i>I've lived there since I was born.</i>	Time expressions: <i>for, since</i> (NOT <i>always, yet</i>) <i>I've always been living in that flat.</i> <i>I've been living there for years.</i>

2 State verbs

With state verbs (e.g. *understand, know, be, own*) we use the present perfect simple, not the present perfect continuous:

- ⚠ ~~*I've been knowing Ben since I was six.*~~
 ✓ *I've known Ben since I was six.*

We can use *always* and *never* with these verbs:

I've always liked ice cream. Switzerland has never had a king.
Have you always owned a car?

State verbs ➤ Unit 29.3

Some verbs (e.g. *live, work, teach, study*) describe an action which continues over a period of time, not a single event. We can use these verbs with *for* or *since* in the present perfect simple or continuous. There's very little difference in meaning:

'How long **have you lived/have you been living** here?' 'We've lived/We've been living in this house since we got married.'

Alice has studied/has been studying maths for three years.

Practice

1 Choose the correct words in *italics>. In two places both answers are possible.*

3.15 Listen and check.

- 0 Jake doesn't have any family. He's always *lived* / *been living* on his own.
 1 He never answers the phone. I've *called* / *been calling* six times!
 2 Sorry I'm so late. I've *waited* / *been waiting* for a call from the New York office.
 3 Debbie knows Seattle really well. She's *lived* / *been living* there for two years.
 4 I'm afraid the house is a mess. We've *decorated* / *been decorating* it.
 5 Look at the new garden lights. Sam's just *turned* / *been turning* them on.
 6 Carol's an expert on economics. She's *studied* / *been studying* it for years.
 7 Harry's an old friend of mine. I've *known* / *been knowing* him since we were kids.
 8 Marking essays is hard work. I've *marked* / *been marking* twenty this evening.
 9 I'm curious about the food here. I haven't *tried* / *been trying* Mexican food before.
 10 I hate cabbage. I've never *liked* / *been liking* it.

2 Match sentences 1 and 2 with A and B in each pair.

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 Rick has had a nice time. | → | A He's been playing in the garden. |
| | 2 Carlo needs a shower. | → | B He's played in the garden all day. |
| 1 | 1 I've just read that detective story. | | A So I know who the murderer is. |
| | 2 I've been reading that detective story. | | B I don't know who the murderer is yet. |
| 2 | 1 We can start making dinner now. | | A I've been cleaning the kitchen. |
| | 2 Sorry my clothes are dirty. | | B I've cleaned the kitchen. |
| 3 | 1 Jane's fixed the computer. | | A You can use it now. |
| | 2 Jane's been fixing the computer. | | B It's taken her most of the day. |
| 4 | 1 Your towels are ready. | | A I've been washing them. |
| | 2 Your towels are still damp. | | B I've washed them. |
| 5 | 1 The suitcases are empty. | | A I've been unpacking. |
| | 2 The suitcases are half empty. | | B I've unpacked. |

3 GRAMMAR IN USE Complete the conversation with suitable forms of the words in brackets.

3.16 Listen and check.

- ROY You look tired. (0) *Have you been working* (you work) all day?
 BEN Not exactly, I (1) (do) some research on the Internet.
 I (2) (try) to get some information about one of our old friends from college.
 ROY Who?
 BEN Dave Colston. Do you remember him?
 ROY Yes. I (3) (not see) him for years! But what do you want to find out?
 BEN Well. I (4) (just get) an email from Philip Markham. He wants to get in touch with Dave but he doesn't know where he is now. He thinks Dave (5) (live) in the Far East for the last few years.
 ROY Yes. I remember he was always interested in oriental philosophy.
 BEN Exactly. I (6) (look at) six or seven different websites already, but I (7) (not find) much information.
 ROY (8) (you try) that website that reunites old college friends?
 BEN Yes. I (9) (already look at) that one, but he's not on it. I posted a message for some of his other friends on some other websites and I (10) (wait) for a reply. But so far I've heard nothing ...

Answers

UNIT 40

- 1** 1 called 2 been waiting 3 lived/been living
4 been decorating 5 turned 6 studied/been
studying 7 known 8 marked 9 tried 10 liked
- 2** 1 1A 2B 2 1B 2A 3 1A 2B 4 1B 2A
5 1B 2A
- 3** 1 've been doing 2 've been trying 3 haven't
seen 4 've just got 5 's been living 6 've looked
at 7 haven't found 8 Have you tried
9 've already looked at 10 've been waiting