

Unit 16

Present perfect continuous (I have been doing)

a Study this example situation:



Is it raining?
No, it isn't but the ground is wet.

It has been raining.

This is the *present perfect continuous* tense:

I/we/they/you **have** (= I've etc.) || **been doing**
he/she/it **has** (= he's etc.)

- You're out of breath. **Have you been running?**
- That man over there is bright red. I think **he's been sunbathing.**
- Why are your clothes so dirty? What **have you been doing?**
- **I've been talking** to Tom about your problem and he thinks...

b We also use the present perfect continuous to ask or say how long something has been happening. This time the action or situation began in the past and is still happening or has just stopped. Study this example:



It is raining now. It began to rain two hours ago and it is still raining.

It has been raining for two hours.

We often use the present perfect continuous in this way, especially with **how long**, **for** and **since**.

Here are some more examples:

- **How long have you been learning** English?
- **They've been waiting** here **for over an hour.**
- **I've been watching** television **since 2 o'clock.**
- George **hasn't been feeling** very well **recently.**
- **Have you been working** hard **today?**

You can also use the present perfect continuous (with **how long**, **for** and **since**) for actions repeated over a period of time:

- She **has been playing** tennis **since she was eight.**
- **How long have you been smoking?**

For more information about the present perfect + **since/for**, see **Units 18-19**.
For the difference between the present perfect simple and continuous, see **Units 17-18**.

past and is still happening or has just stopped. Study this example: