

Unit 17

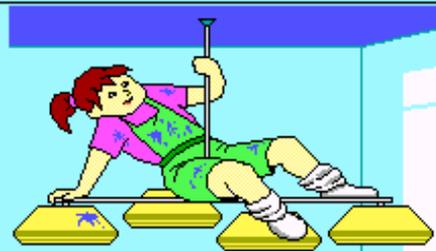
**Present perfect continuous (I have been doing) or
present perfect simple (I have done)?**

a Study these examples situations:



Ann's clothes are covered in paint.
Has been painting is the *present perfect continuous* tense.

We are interested in the action. It does not matter whether something has been finished or not. In the example, the action has not been finished.



The ceiling was white. Now it's ^{blue}.
Has painted is the *present perfect simple* tense.

This time, the important thing is that something has been finished. We are interested in the result of the action, not in the action itself.

Here are some pairs of examples:

Tom's hands are very dirty. **He has been repairing the car.**
You've been smoking too much recently. You should smoke less.

The car is going again now. **Tom has repaired it.**
Somebody has smoked all my cigarettes. The packet is empty.

b

We use the *continuous* form to say how long something has been happening:

Ann has been writing letters all day.
How long have you been reading that book?
Jin has been playing tennis since 2 o'clock.

We use the *simple* form to say how much we have done, how many things we have done, or how many times we have done something:

Ann has written ten letters today.
How many pages of that book have you read?
Jin has played tennis three times this week.

See **Unit 18** for more information about the present perfect and *how long?*

c Some verbs are not used in the continuous form, for example **know**. You have to say **have known** (not 'have been knowing'). For a list of these verbs see **Unit 3b**.

Tom's hands are very dirty. **He has been repairing the car.**

The car is going again now. **Tom has repaired it.**