

The use of tenses

The Present Perfect Simple

1. To say that a complete action is connected with the present. To talk about the results of a complete action.

I have broken my leg. (i can't go skiing.NOW)

She has passed the exam.

2. To give news of recent events.

I have just got married.

To give details we use past tenses.

3. To talk about completed action with expressions ever, never, before, yet (questions, negatives), already (affirmative sentences).

Has Ben come yet? Yes, and he has already start to make trouble.

4. To say that sth has happened several times up to the present.

I've seen this film twice.

I've sent 5 mails since breakfast.

5. To say how long situations have lasted.

I've known her for years.

6. In sentences constructed with this/it/that is...

This is the first time I have seen him dance.

The Present Perfect Continuous

To talk about:

- 1) Situations which started in the past and are still going on or may stop now.

It's been raining since 6 o'clock in the morning.

We've been waiting for you for an hour.

For—express's a period of time

Since—starting point

- 2) With expressions like ALLDAY/ALLWEEK... to focus on the action/situations and to emphasise a continuous ACTIVITY.

I've been reading for 4 hours continuous ACTIVITY.

I have read 40 pages.

He's been gardening all afternoon (continuous ACTIVITY). He has planted a lot of new...

3) Long or repeated action that have finished recently and have present results.

Why is your hair wet (present result)? I've been swimming.

She's very dirty. She's been cleaning the cellar.

4) To make the action sound longer and more annoying.

Who's been sleeping in my bed? Who's been using my computer?

The Past Simple

To talk about:

a) Actions which happened at a particular time in the past (yesterday, two days ago, last month...)

He was born in 1990.

b) About actions which happened one after another.

He got up, had breakfast and went to work.

c) It express's situations which covered a period of time in the past (permanent situations)

She lived in London in the 70's.

d) Repeated action.

He carried an umbrella, when it snowed.

The Past Continuous

(a) For actions in progress around a certain point of time in the past.

At 5 o'clock the guests were having tea.

(b) Two actions in progress at the same time. (while, when, as)

While i was cooking my husband was doing the shopping.

(c) The action was going on(a background action,situation) when another action happened.

I was getting on the bus when he called me.

(d) An action which covered a period of time (from... to..., between...and...)

(e) DURATION

I was doing my homework from 5 to 6.

(f) for temporary situations

It happened while I was staying with the Brown's.

(g) To emphasise frequent action (always)
He was always borrowing money from her.

The Past Perfect Simple

- ✓ To say that an action happened before another action in the past.
She was crying because she had broken her leg.
He knew the book by heart, because he had read it five times.
- ✓ It's common after past verbs of saying/thinking to talk about things that happened before sth was said.
He said that he had never lied in his life.
I knew that she had paid the bill.
- ✓ After it/that was + superlative/ordinal numeral
That is the best film I had ever seen.

The Past Perfect Continuous

- To say how long an activity has been going on.

My legs were stiff because I had been standing still for 3 hours.
We had been living in London for 5 years when we bought this house.