

Difference between present perfect and present perfect continuous tenses

The present perfect continuous tense is used to talk about a continuous, but not necessarily finished action or situation.

The present perfect tense is used to talk about a finished action or situation.

Compare:

I have been gardening since morning. (Focus on continuity)

I have planted several new saplings. (Focus on completion)

I have been reading since morning. (Focus on continuity)

I have read two books since morning. (Focus on completion)

Temporary and permanent

The present perfect continuous tense is used to talk about more temporary actions and situations; the present perfect tense is used to talk about longer-lasting or permanent situations.

That boy has been standing at the gate for hours. (Temporary action or situation)

The temple has stood on the hill for hundreds of years. (Longer-lasting or permanent situation)

Answer the following questions using the hints given in the brackets.

1. What have you been doing since morning? (learning my lessons)

2. How has he been feeling since he took that medicine? (much better)

3. What has Dad been doing all morning? (reading)

4. Have you been following the developments closely? (yes)

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5. For whom have you been working so hard? (my kids)

Answers

1. I have been learning my lessons.
2. He has been feeling much better.
3. Dad has been reading all morning.
4. Yes, I have been following the developments closely.
5. I have been working so hard for my kids.