

THE PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS TENSE

(I have been doing)

Look at these sentences :

1. I started learning English eight years ago. I am still learning English. I have been learning English for eight years.
2. It started raining at 2 o'clock. It is still raining. It has been raining since 2 o'clock.

The underlined verb forms are in the Present Perfect Continuous Tense. We use this tense when we want to talk about an action (quite a long action) that started in the past, has continued up to the time of speaking, and will probably continue in the future. It is therefore used with verbs that imply a prolonged action (e.g. "work," "study," "live," "learn," "wait," etc.), but not with verbs like "fall," "drop," "break," "see," etc.

LExercise 15

Do the following sentences, using the Present Perfect Continuous Tense:

EXAMPLE:

Ali is studying. He began studying three hours ago.
Ali. for three hours.

ANSWER:

Ali has been studying for three hours.

1. My old schoolfriend is looking for a job. He began looking six months ago.

He for six months.

2. My nephew is working on his Master's thesis. He started working on it when his proposal was approved by the Advisory Committee.

He since his proposal was approved.

3. Negotiations are going on between the two belligerent countries. They began in September.

Negotiations since September.

4. I am living in Medinah. I began living in Medinah six years ago.

I for the last six years.

5. Saleh is waiting in the lounge. He began waiting half an hour ago.

He for the last half an hour.

Exercise 16

Write each of the following sentences twice, using either FOR or SINCE as appropriate :

1. Mr. X has been working in this office
(a) he left school;
(b) eight months.

2. No one has filled the vacancy
(a) 1994;
(b) about a year.

3. We haven't received any letter
(a) last week;
(b) the last week.
4. I haven't seen you
(a) ages;
(b) we last met in Riaydh.
5. He is fasting: he hasn't eaten anything
(a) 4.00 A.M.;
(b) twelve hours.