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Grammar Reference

Present perfect and present perfect continuous

The present perfect continuous is used to talk about:

1. actions that started in the past and continue in the present. The present perfect continuous emphasizes the continuation of the action.

Example:

He's **been reading** her novel. (He hasn't finished reading the novel yet.)

He's **read** her novel. (He's finished it.)

2. recently finished actions with a present result that often can be seen.

Example:

A: Why are you hot?

B: I've **been running**. Not: ~~I've run~~.

3. situations that focus on the activity and not the result.

Example:

She's **been studying**. (This is why he hasn't seen her.)

She's **finished** her work. (Now he can see her.)

“How long” is often used to focus on the activity. “How much/many” is often used to focus on the result.

Example:

How long have you been saving money? (I want to know about the activity.)

How much money have you saved? (I want to know about the result.)

Note: Don't use the present perfect continuous with stative verbs which are related to thinking and opinions, feelings and emotions, as well as senses: *know, remember, like, believe, smell, etc.*

Verb patterns with verb-ing or to-infinitive

When one verb follows another, the second verb is either a gerund (verb-ing form) or a to-infinitive (to + verb).

1. Verbs followed by **-ing** (gerund): *can't stand, enjoy, don't mind, avoid, dislike, adore*
2. Verbs followed by the to-infinitive: *agree, promise, want choose, decide, forget, refuse, expect*
3. Many verbs can use the pattern: verb + somebody + to-infinitive: *allow, help, want, remind, advise, invite, tell*
4. Some verbs can be followed by both forms: *begin, start, continue, stop, remember, like, love, hate, prefer*

Note: Sometimes the meaning changes depending on whether it's followed by a gerund or an infinitive.

I stopped smoking. = I gave up the habit.

I stopped to smoke. = I stopped at a place and smoked a cigarette.

Count and non-count nouns

Count

A count noun can be singular or plural. Countable nouns can be counted. With singular count nouns, use the articles "a" or "an". Plural count nouns do not need an article.

Example:

He eats an orange a day. She loves eating oranges.

Non-count

Non-count nouns have only one form, and so require a quantifier to show how much of it there is. Non-count nouns cannot be counted.

Example:

some rice/ a kilo of rice Not: ~~one rice, two rices~~

In Asia, people eat rice with every meal.

A rice is incorrect, so specify *a ... of ...*

A cup of coffee, a bottle of water...

Non-count nouns are generally not used in the plural, for example, information, news, hair advice, paper.

Example:

Can I have some information? Not: ~~informations~~

Some non-count nouns are used only in plural form, for example, scissors, jeans

Example:

I bought some jeans/a pair of jeans. Not: ~~a jeans~~

Quantifiers

Count	Non-count
some/(not) any	some/(not) any
many	much
a few/a couple of	a little
a lot of	a lot of

Some non-count nouns are often treated as count nouns because we understand how much someone is talking about.

Example:

A: Can I have a coffee, please? (a coffee = a cup of coffee)

B: Sure. Do you take one sugar or two? (one sugar = a cube of sugar)

Some of the most common nouns that can be both count and non-count are: *sugar, water, coffee, tea, chocolate, ice cream.*