



40 Present perfect simple or continuous?

1 Differences in use

PRESENT PERFECT SIMPLE	PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS
An action that is completed: <i>I've driven an automatic car before.</i>	An activity that is still continuing, or has just ended: <i>I've been driving since nine o'clock.</i>
emphasis on the result of a past action: 	emphasis on the cause of a present result: 
<i>The mechanic has repaired the car.</i> (It's ready for the customer now.)	Why is Caroline dirty? <i>She's been repairing the car.</i>
To answer the questions 'how much?' or 'how many?' <i>We've played six games.</i> <i>Karl has driven 200 miles.</i>	To answer the question 'how long?' <i>We've been playing for three hours.</i> <i>Karl's been driving since nine o'clock.</i>
Time expressions: <i>always, recently, before, ever, already, just, still, yet, for</i> and <i>since</i> <i>I've always lived in that flat.</i> <i>I've lived there since I was born.</i>	Time expressions: <i>for, since</i> (NOT <i>always, yet</i>) <i>I've always been living in that flat.</i> ✓ <i>I've been living there for years.</i>

2 State verbs

With state verbs (e.g. *understand, know, be, own*) we use the present perfect simple, not the present perfect continuous:

- ! ~~*I've been knowing Ben since I was six.*~~
✓ *I've known Ben since I was six.*

We can use *always* and *never* with these verbs:

I've always liked ice cream. Switzerland has never had a king.
Have you always owned a car?

State verbs ➤ Unit 29.3

Some verbs (e.g. *live, work, teach, study*) describe an action which continues over a period of time, not a single event. We can use these verbs with *for* or *since* in the present perfect simple or continuous. There's very little difference in meaning:

'How long have you lived/have you been living here?' 'We've lived/We've been living in this house since we got married.'

Alice has studied/has been studying maths for three years.