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GRAMMAR

Present perfect

Present perfect simple

- For everyday events connected to the present, without a definite past time.
Events may be recent, or part of the current situation:
*What **has happened**?*
*The lights **have failed**!*
*Astronomers **have discovered** three more moons orbiting the planet.*
The time can be all time up to the present and need not have a time reference:
*No one **has proved** that intelligent life exists on other planets.*
- Time references
The use of some time expressions is linked with the present perfect simple:
***Recently** the number of car owners has risen dramatically.*
*The situation has worsened **since the end of 2001**.*
***This is the first time** researchers have found this insect in the Antarctic.*
*The authorities have **already** taken measures to deal with the problem.*

Present perfect simple or past simple?

- Indefinite and definite time
In this sentence the action has happened in a period up to the present, and may well continue:
*This company **has produced** some excellent products. (present perfect simple)*
In this sentence the action is finished. The company may no longer exist. The events are in a period of time not connected to the present:
*The ABC company **produced** some very successful products. (past simple)*
Compare these time references:
***So far/Up until now** the ABC company has produced ... (present perfect simple)*
***At that time/Once/In the past** the ABC company produced ... (past simple)*

Present perfect continuous

- For recent continuing activities, emphasizing the length of the activities, and suggesting that the activity will continue.
*They **have been investigating** the same problem for many years.*

Present perfect continuous or present perfect simple?

- With verbs which describe a continuing state, e.g. *live, work*, there is little contrast:
*How long has Tom **worked** here? How long has Tom **been working** here?*
*The team **has been working** on this project for the past six months.*

- With verbs which describe events, present perfect simple emphasizes completion:
*They've **found** some interesting results.* (completed)
*They've **been finding** some interesting results.* (during a recent period – not completed)
Use depends on context, and on the choice of the user.

Present perfect simple and continuous uses

- To describe recent trends and developments:
*The political situation **has now improved**.*
*A series of poor harvests **has led** to a rise in migration away from the countryside.*
*Over the past decade, the amount of water consumed **has increased** twofold.*
*In recent years, the area **has been experiencing** something of a renaissance.*

Present continuous or present perfect continuous?

- In many cases, when we describe uncompleted actions, we can use either present continuous, to show what is happening now; or present perfect continuous, to show that it has been happening for a period of time up to now.
In these examples, each tense describes the actions of the scientists, but with a different emphasis.
Using present continuous emphasizes that they are currently studying the data:
*Scientists **are studying** the data, and hope to publish their results soon.*
Using present perfect continuous emphasizes the period of time during which they have been studying the data:
*Scientists **have been studying** the data, and hope to publish their results soon.*

→ SEE ALSO

Grammar 8: Time words

Grammar 10: Direct and indirect questions

1 Underline the most suitable verb form in each sentence.**Water on Mars**

- 1 Scientists have recently discovered/recently discovered that there are traces of water beneath the surface of Mars.
- 2 Instruments carried by the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter (MRO) which has been circling/was circling the planet since 2006, have detected/detected large quantities of ice beneath the surface at the bottom of meteorite craters.
- 3 The MRO has found/found the new craters in August last year.
- 4 As the ice has quickly melted/quickly melted on the planet's surface, the discovery has been/was fortunate.
- 5 Although the research programme has found/found traces of water at the poles during its early stages, this is the first time it has detected/it detected ice half way between the planet's north pole and its equator.
- 6 This suggested that there has been/was a lot more water below the surface than previously supposed.
- 7 Scientists have also believed/also believed they understood the origins of this ice.
- 8 Their theory has been/was that the climate of Mars was more humid up until a few thousand years ago, and that the water in this ice has come from/is coming from this earlier period.
- 9 Since its arrival in Mars orbit, the MRO has been monitoring/was monitoring surface and weather conditions. It has also studied/It has also been studying potential landing sites for future Mars programmes.
- 10 According to experts, this latest discovery has shown/has been showing that the MRO is well worth the \$720million it has cost/cost to build.

2 Complete each short text with the present simple or continuous, present perfect simple or continuous, or past simple or continuous form of the verbs in brackets. Sometimes more than one answer is possible.

Text 1

In a surprise announcement, the Governor of the Central Bank (1) has announced (announce) his resignation. 'I (2) (spend) eight years in this post,' he (3) (tell) reporters, 'and I (4) (feel) that this is the time to move on.' The Governor, who previously (5) (hold) the post of Professor of Economics at Cambridge University, (6) (now consider) a return to academic life.

Text 2

Since the new flu virus (7) (make) its appearance last year, the Health Authority (8) (prepare) to respond to a pandemic, and local hospitals (9) (already draw up) detailed plans. In March the Authority (10) (start) to stockpile essential supplies, and more recently (11) (also begin) the process of creating a pool of extra staff from people who (12) (already work) for the organization, in order to deal with any possible staff shortages.

- 3 Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using present perfect simple or continuous and a form of the word underlined.**
- 1 The company provides financial services, and was established 14 years ago.
The company has provided/has been providing for the past 14 years.
 - 2 Fiona Allan writes the 'Science Impact' books, and there are five so far in the series.
..... of the 'Science Impact' series so far.
 - 3 If there is life on other planets, it is so far undiscovered.
Scientists so far.
 - 4 The construction of the Olympic Stadium is now complete.
The construction team
 - 5 The company started green vehicle production two years ago.
..... for the past two years.
 - 6 Professor Thompson now lives in Vancouver, where she arrived four years ago.
..... for four years.
 - 7 Ann Smith became chief executive five years ago, and still holds this post.
..... for the past five years.
 - 8 Recent statistics show a rise in the number of young people entering higher education.
The number recently.
 - 9 The satellite started circling the Moon two years ago.
..... for two years.
 - 10 The research team's conclusion is that the new vaccine is not effective.
..... the new vaccine is not effective.

- 4 Complete the text by writing a suitable form of the verb in brackets in each space.**

Is a best friend good for your health?

When we (1) consider (consider) how many thousands of years humans (2) (live) with dogs, it is surprising that the serious scientific study of the interaction between animals and humans (3) (only recently begin). There (4) (always be) plenty of anecdotal evidence, but serious research into this relationship is relatively recent. The question is whether (5) (there be) any real health benefits in owning a dog. Recently researchers (6) (look) at this in more detail, and results (7) (seem) to suggest that dogs can indeed help to improve our health. Dog-owners (8) (recover) more rapidly from stress and have lower heart rates and blood pressure. Taking the dog for a walk is good exercise, as you will know if you (9) (ever own) a dog, and the social connections made through having a dog are beneficial to older people. As one subject comments in the report, 'Since I got my dog, my life has (10) (change) out of all recognition. I (11) (meet) new people, and as far as my health is concerned, I (12) (never feel) fitter. I (13) (never think) a dog could make so much difference!' Some researchers (14) (also investigate) links between health and other types of pet, and some (15) (believe) their results prove that even a pet snake or rat is good for the health.

5 Write a new sentence with a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word in bold. Do not change the word given.

- 1 The project is still continuing.
yet
..... *The project hasn't finished yet.*
- 2 There has never been such a serious financial crisis before.
first
.....
- 3 There is no proof that the dinosaurs died in this way.
proved
.....
- 4 The situation is not the same as it was in 2008.
since
.....
- 5 It hasn't stopped raining yet.
still
.....
- 6 This is my first visit to Bulgaria.
been
.....
- 7 Do you know Professor Johnson?
before
.....

6 Complete the text by writing the suitable form of the verb in brackets in each space.

It is not generally known that Rudolf Diesel originally (1) *designed*... (design) the engine that (2) (bear) his name to use vegetable oil. Now, with increasing oil prices, interest in producing such bio-fuels (3) (rise). In recent years, companies in some Pacific nations, where coconut trees are common, (4) (experiment) with coconut oil as a fuel. The price of coconut oil (5) (soar) lately, so the idea is to export coconut fuel oil to the US and Europe, rather than use it at home. However, use of coconut fuel oil (6) (be) common in the past on Pacific islands, especially during World War Two when the islands (7) (suffer) fuel shortages, and in recent years there (8) (be) more interest in using coconut oil fuel for local consumption. The oil has disadvantages, however, as it (9) (begin) to solidify below 25°C and (10) (contain) many impurities which can damage diesel engines. However, a company in the Marshall Islands (11) (use) the oil in diesel trucks for some years without too many problems. After some earlier experiments, they (12) (find) that a blend of coconut oil with diesel (13) (work) best, and recently (14) (also combine) coconut oil with other fuels, such as kerosene. In Samoa, the electricity company (15) (use) a coconut oil blend successfully for some years in its generators. So in the future, coconut oil (16) (seem) likely to become an important economic factor in the fuel industry in this region.