

# Unit 2

## The present perfect continuous tense



### Grammar in Context

Theme: News media

Words by Theme



Read the following editorial and answer the questions.

Editorial By the Editorial<sup>1</sup> Board of Hong Kong Post

### *Time to Thank Your Domestic Helpers*

Since the 1970s, foreign domestic helpers have been working in Hong Kong. These helpers have been providing affordable services<sup>2</sup> so that more locals<sup>3</sup> can go to work. They take care of our children and help us out with our chores. Since they have been playing an integral part in our homes, it is essential<sup>4</sup> for us to appreciate their work and be understanding.

There are always shirts to iron and babies to soothe. Please make sure you do not give them tasks on holidays. They have been working for days and need rests at weekends.

Some people have been complaining that **domestic helpers have been gathering in public spaces**. It may be true that they have been congregating in public areas and this has been causing inconvenience to passers-by and affecting the business<sup>5</sup> of the shops nearby.

However, they deserve a place to rest and enjoy themselves during their holidays. Let's not forget that they have been contributing to the city's economy<sup>6</sup> for decades.



- Underline all the verbs that are in the present perfect continuous tense.
- Circle the correct answer.  
The editorial discusses ( solved / ongoing / predicted ) issues.
- Read the words in bold. Which of the following statements has a similar meaning? Tick (✓) the correct one.  

<input type="checkbox"/> They always gathered in the past.	<input type="checkbox"/> They started a gathering that has not ended.
<input type="checkbox"/> They had a gathering that still affects them.	<input type="checkbox"/> They have gatherings repeatedly.

## Forms of the present perfect continuous tense

We form the present perfect continuous tense with *have / has + been + -ing* form of the verb.

Statements	I / You / We / They	<i>have</i> ('ve) <i>have not</i> (haven't)	<i>been waiting</i>	<i>here for hours.</i>		
	He / She / It	<i>has</i> ('s) <i>has not</i> (hasn't)				
Questions	<i>Have</i>	I / you / we / they	<i>been waiting</i>	<i>here for hours?</i>		
	<i>Has</i>	he / she / it				
Short answers	Yes, No,	I / you / we / they	<i>have.</i> <i>have not</i> (haven't).	Yes, No,	he / she / it	<i>has.</i> <i>has not</i> (hasn't).

### PART 1 Talking about the duration of an action

We use the present perfect continuous tense to talk about the following situations.

Situations		Examples	
An action that began in the past and ...	is still going on	<i>Someone has been following us. I am scared.</i> <i>The inflation rate has been rising steadily.</i>	<i>has been following / rising</i> past ————— present
	has just ended	<i>I have been working all night. I am feeling like a zombie.</i> <i>Have you been eating garlic for snacks? Your breath smells terrible!</i>	<i>have been working / eating</i> past ————— present

### Let's compare

Present perfect	Present perfect continuous
<b>Focuses on the completion of an action</b> <i>I have revised for the maths exams.</i> (I finished the revision.)	<b>Focuses on the continuity of an action</b> <i>I have been revising for the maths exam for hours.</i> (I am still revising.)
<b>Focuses on the result</b> <i>Dad has tried to remember the password.</i>	<b>Focuses on the activity</b> <i>Dad has been trying to remember the password.</i>
<b>Says how many</b> <i>Agnes has written six book reports.</i>	<b>Says how long</b> <i>Agnes has been writing the book reports all day.</i>
<b>Often used with the time expressions below:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I have lied for a long time / since we first met.</i></li> <li><i>She has already / just left.</i></li> <li><i>We have not decided yet.</i></li> <li>A: <i>Have you ever tried oysters?</i> B: No, <i>I have never tried them.</i></li> </ul>	<b>Often used with the time expressions below:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The website has not been working for several hours.</i></li> <li><i>My parents have been taking care of my children since I started a new job.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Can be used with verbs like agree, be, hear, know, own, see, start, want and understand</b> <i>Have you started your new course?</i> ✓	<b>Cannot be used with verbs like agree, be, hear, know, own, see, start, want and understand</b> <i>Have you been starting your new course?</i> ✗



### Exercise 1.1

Are the underlined words correct? Put a tick (✓) or a cross (X) in the boxes. Write the correct word(s) in the spaces provided.

1. Mum <u>has just finished</u> shopping. She is carrying four paper bags.	✓	
2. <u>Have you been doing</u> your homework? Please submit it now.	X	Have you done
3. The renovation of the campus <u>has been beginning</u> since summer.		
4. Ben is panting because he <u>has been running</u> .		
5. It <u>has been not raining</u> for months. Many animals are dying.		
6. Mum <u>has been baking</u> the bagels already. I can smell the aroma.		
7. The volunteers <u>have been searching</u> for the missing hiker for days.		
8. The singer <u>has been releasing</u> three new songs over the past six months.		
9. My neighbour's dog has been barking <u>all day</u> . I can't stand it anymore.		
10. The students <u>have been hearing</u> the rumour that the principal is resigning.		



### Exercise 1.2

Complete the blog entry using the correct form of the given verbs. Use the simple past, present perfect or present perfect continuous tense.

3 May 20XX (Tuesday)

Today (1) \_\_\_\_\_ was \_\_\_\_\_ (be) my third day in France learning French cooking. I (2) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (cook) non-stop since I came here. So far, I (3) \_\_\_\_\_ (enjoy) decorating  
 a cake the most. Still, I (4) \_\_\_\_\_ (not be) really happy on the first two days. My  
 classmate Jean (5) \_\_\_\_\_ (joke) that my French is so poor that he could not understand  
 it. He (6) \_\_\_\_\_ (be) surely the bizarre one as other people (7) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (understand) me perfectly. Ashamed of being biased against me, he (8) \_\_\_\_\_ (try)  
 to make up with me all day. He worries that I (9) \_\_\_\_\_ (not let go) of the hard  
 feelings. That really gets to me though.

Learning culinary skills is harder than I (10) \_\_\_\_\_ (expect). In addition to cooking, we  
 have to learn the history and culture of the country. To be honest, I (11) \_\_\_\_\_ (know)  
 nothing about France before I came here. I (12) \_\_\_\_\_ (read) the textbooks this whole  
 evening. I'm really tired now.



## PART 2 Talking about repeated continuing actions

We use the present perfect continuous tense to talk about the following situation.

Situation	Examples
An action that repeated over a period of time in the past and continues up to the present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>She <i>has been spending</i> her weekends in the Central Library since this summer.</li> <li>We <i>have been playing</i> basketball at lunchtimes.</li> </ul>

### Let's compare

Both the present perfect and present perfect continuous tenses can be used to talk about repeated actions completed at unknown times. (Refer to Book 1 Unit 11 for detailed explanation of the present perfect tense.)

Present perfect	Present perfect continuous
Says how many times <i>I have hiked four times</i> recently.	Does not say how many times <i>I have been hiking</i> since I was little.



### Exercise 2.1

Write the sentences with the help of the given words using the given tenses.

- I get up at 6 am last couple of weeks (.)

I have been getting up at 6 am for the last couple of weeks. (present perfect continuous)
- the runners train for the half-marathon April (.)

\_\_\_\_\_ (present perfect continuous)
- the student cheat in tests many times before (?)

\_\_\_\_\_ (present perfect)
- they play table tennis more than five years (.)

\_\_\_\_\_ (present perfect continuous)
- our school debate team win two competitions lately (.)

\_\_\_\_\_ (present perfect)
- the subscribers of that YouTube channel check out the latest videos (?)

\_\_\_\_\_ (present perfect continuous)



## Exercise 2.2

Tim and Sue are talking. Complete the conversation with the help of the given words. Use the simple future, present perfect or present perfect continuous tense.

your parents—agree    you—go    buy    not knit    you—make    check    promise    work out

**Tim:** (1) Have your parents agreed to let us hold the party at your place?

**Sue:** No. They said we should look for somewhere else. I'm asking Mia to see if we can use her place.

**Tim:** Alright. I've heard that you are making knitted bracelets by yourself. (2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ one for me?

**Sue:** Maybe next time. I (3) \_\_\_\_\_ because of the coming exam.

**Tim:** I see. I (4) \_\_\_\_\_ one at the Sunday's handicraft market then.  
By the way, (5) \_\_\_\_\_ to the gym? You look so fit.

**Sue:** You're right. I (6) \_\_\_\_\_ lately.

**Tim:** You (7) \_\_\_\_\_ your phone. Are you expecting someone's call?

**Sue:** Yes. The logistics company (8) \_\_\_\_\_ to give me a call ...

## PART 3 Comparisons with other continuous tenses

Present continuous tense	Says how long? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Action completed? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
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- *I **am taking** a summer job.* (temporary action)

Past continuous tense	Says how long? <input type="checkbox"/> It depends.	Action completed? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
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- *Sam **was working** part-time the whole summer holiday last year.* (says how long)
- *We **were going** on a field trip when Mum called.* (does not say how long)

Present perfect continuous tense	Says how long? <input type="checkbox"/> It depends.	Action completed? <input type="checkbox"/> It depends.
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- *I've **been selling** flags since this morning. I **haven't sold** any of them.* (says how long; action not completed)
- *I'm **resting** now. I **have been standing** continuously.* (does not say how long; action completed)



## Exercise 3.1

Fill in the blanks using the correct form of the given verbs. Use the present continuous, past continuous or present perfect continuous tense.

- Noah is learning (learn) the basics of playing the guitar. He is an absolute beginner.
- Ted \_\_\_\_\_ (visit) the hospital since he broke his leg. He is recovering slowly.
- I \_\_\_\_\_ (go) to Europe on holiday every summer since 2009.

4. Gabriel: My computer keeps shutting down.  
Harrison: \_\_\_\_\_ (it/display) the blue screen errors?
5. I \_\_\_\_\_ (leave) school. I'll be home in an hour.
6. Ken \_\_\_\_\_ (bath) for a while. Let's hope he has not fainted in the bathroom.
7. John's ice-cream \_\_\_\_\_ (melt) while he was trying to take a selfie.
8. I \_\_\_\_\_ (not feel) well lately. Sometimes I feel like throwing up.



### Exercise 3.2

Look at the pictures and complete the sentences using the correct form of the given verbs. Use the present continuous, past continuous or present perfect continuous tense.



Zoe has been preparing for the public exam her whole life! She \_\_\_\_\_ on her revision now.



The Smiths \_\_\_\_\_ on the farm for years. The wife \_\_\_\_\_ the sunflowers they grew when the photo was taken.



Ann \_\_\_\_\_ to Paris over the past few years. She \_\_\_\_\_ Hong Kong again today.



We \_\_\_\_\_ in this maze for almost two hours! I \_\_\_\_\_ tired.



Cub: \_\_\_\_\_ something, Dad?  
Lion: No, I \_\_\_\_\_  
I \_\_\_\_\_ the whole time.



Watch out! Naughty Ricky \_\_\_\_\_ water balloons at people! He \_\_\_\_\_ that since childhood.

## Grammar Wrap-up

Leo is reading a web page about a fire in a walled village. Complete the web page using the correct form of the given words.


🔍

LATEST NEWS || LOCAL

### LIVE: House on fire leading to evacuation

By Agnes Kwan, Editor    LAST UPDATED 19:32, June 20 20XX

A house in Fanling Wai \_\_\_\_\_ caught \_\_\_\_\_ (catch) fire at around 4 pm. The house \_\_\_\_\_ (burn down) while its owner was cooking with firewood.



Follow the latest updates on this breaking news in our live blog below.

19:32
No serious injuries reported

- The authorities \_\_\_\_\_ (just / confirm) that there are no serious injuries.
- Two village elders \_\_\_\_\_ (say) to the press, 'We want to thank the firefighters. They \_\_\_\_\_ (save) our lives.'

↑

19:07
Fire extinguished

- The villagers \_\_\_\_\_ (now / return) to their homes in groups.
- A press release from the Fire Services Department reads: 'The department \_\_\_\_\_ (long / be) aware that some villagers \_\_\_\_\_ (prefer) traditional cooking methods. We would like to warn the public about their potential dangers.'

↑

18:48
Firefighting still in progress

- 'We \_\_\_\_\_ (still / fight) the fire,' the senior fireman said, 'but there's nothing to worry about. Everything is under control.'
- Fire engines \_\_\_\_\_ (go) in and out of the village since the completion of the evacuation.

↑

18:02
Evacuation to North District Park

The authorities \_\_\_\_\_ (evacuate) the villagers to the nearby park since the fire started.

# Grammar in Pre-DSE Text Type

Theme: News media

You are writing a feature article for *Hong Kong Post*. Complete the article using the correct form of the given verbs.

keep    not be    add    become    run    think of  
work    arrange    co-operate    open    widen    furnish

Words by  
Theme



22 MARCH 20XX

HKP INVESTIGATES<sup>1</sup>

## Indie<sup>2</sup> Bookshop Thrives<sup>3</sup> in San Po Kong

On the second floor of an old building in San Po Kong is an independent bookshop. Mr Yip, the proprietor, (1) has been keeping records of its daily transactions for three years. Apart from bookkeeping, he (2) \_\_\_\_\_ as its salesperson and book buyer for a number of times. In fact, he (3) \_\_\_\_\_ flowers while we were interviewing<sup>4</sup> him.

When Mr Yip (4) \_\_\_\_\_ the shop, his vision was to promote the kinds of books he loved. In the early years, the development of the store (5) \_\_\_\_\_ remarkable.

This whole year, he (6) \_\_\_\_\_ ways to entertain a hip, young crowd. So far, he (7) \_\_\_\_\_ the book selection and (8) \_\_\_\_\_ the shop to make it photogenic. Also, he (9) \_\_\_\_\_ an art event at the moment. Recently, the shop (10) \_\_\_\_\_ a popular hangout of young people.

Mr Yip (11) \_\_\_\_\_, 'We (12) \_\_\_\_\_ with publishers<sup>5</sup> in lessening the effect of supply chain issues on small bookshops for the entire month. The response is reassuring. We will encourage the public to support small bookshops more.'



More to take away

bookkeeping (n.) = the job of recording the financial accounts  
photogenic (adj.) = always looking attractive in photographs

We use the present perfect continuous tense to emphasise how long an action has lasted. The action may still be going on or may have just ended. We also use it to talk about repeated actions that continue up to the present.

- I **have not been gardening**. It **has been raining** the whole week. (actions are still going on)
- They **have been working** for hours. They are taking a break now. (action has just ended)
- She **has been training** for a boxing match over the past few months. (repeated actions)

## Version 1



You are reading an internal email of the newsroom of a TV station. Read the email and pay attention to the underlined parts. The verb forms of the words in bold are wrong.

**From:** chriswong@mtv.hk  
**To:** albertlee@mtv.hk  
**Subject:** Press release to be written

Dear Albert,

Please write a press release on behalf of MoonTV with the following notes. **(1) We are wishing to** refute a charge made by an anonymous audience member known as 'Private Eye'.

Since the beginning of this month, **(2) 'Private Eye' is casting** doubts on the trustworthiness of our journalists on an online forum. Over the past few days, **(3) he or she has been making** several unfounded claims. **(4) The charge is that our reporters were following** a public figure day and night since late March. 'Private Eye' claims that the public figure lives on an outlying island and **(5) our reporters are disturbing** the residents on the island for days. **(6) However, our records show that our reporters have visited** there only once last week. They were there to report on the effects of a typhoon on the residents.

**(7) For weeks, 'Private Eye' provides** details concerning the charge. Nevertheless, when the members of the forum asked for more information about the public figure, **(8) he or she has been dodging the** questions a few times.

I hope you find the information helpful.

With thanks,  
Chris



### More to take away







private eye (n.) = a private detective

## Version 2

Correct the mistakes in the underlined parts in Version 1 using the correct tenses.

**From:**

**To:**

**Subject:**   **Send**     

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Dear Albert,

Please write a press release on behalf of MoonTV with the following notes. **(1)** We wish to refute a charge made by an anonymous audience member known as ‘Private Eye’.

Since the beginning of this month, **(2)** \_\_\_\_\_

Over the past few days, **(3)** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **(4)** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ ‘Private Eye’ claims that the public figure lives on an outlying island and **(5)** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **(6)** \_\_\_\_\_

They were there to report on the effects of a typhoon on the residents.

**(7)** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Nevertheless, when the members of the forum asked for more information about the public figure, **(8)** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I hope you find the information helpful.





With thanks,

Chris



### Brain Breaks

Some newscasters do vocal warm-ups with tongue twisters. Let's try to say:

-  Betty loves the velvet vest best.
-  I wish to wash my Irish wristwatch.
-  Whose shoes does the dog choose to chew?
-  A kitten is eating chicken in the kitchen.