

Present Perfect: For, Since

Grammar Lesson, Examples & 30 Practice Questions

Present Perfect: For and Since

The **present perfect** is a verb tense we use to talk about actions or situations that started in the past and are still true or important now. In English, we often use two special words with the present perfect: **for** and **since**.

These two words help us talk about **how long** something has been happening.

Look at these simple examples:

- I have lived here **for** five years.
- She has worked at the school **since** 2019.

Both sentences tell us about something that started in the past and is still happening now. But **for** and **since** are used in different ways. Let's learn how!

How to Form the Present Perfect

Before we look at **for** and **since**, let's quickly review how to make the present perfect tense. Don't worry — we will keep it simple!

The present perfect uses the verb **have** (or **has**) plus the **past participle** of the main verb.

The **past participle** is a special form of a verb. For regular verbs, it usually ends in **-ed**. For example: *work* → *worked*, *live* → *lived*.

Some verbs are irregular and change completely. For example: *be* → *been*, *know* → *known*, *have* → *had*.

Subject	Have / Has	Past Participle	Example
I	have	lived	I have lived here for two years.
You	have	worked	You have worked here since Monday.
He / She / It	has	known	She has known him since 2018.
We	have	been	We have been friends for ten years.
They	have	studied	They have studied English for six months.

Short form (contraction): We often shorten **have** and **has** in spoken English.

I have → I've

You have → You've

He has → He's

She has → She's

We have → We've

They have → They've

For example: *I've lived here for five years. / She's worked there since 2020.*

Using "For" with the Present Perfect

We use **for** to talk about a **period of time** — a length of time from start to now.

Think of it this way: **for** answers the question "*How long?*" with a duration (an amount of time).

for + a period of time

Look at this mini-situation:

My name is Tom. I started living in London five years ago. I still live in London today.

→ **I have lived in London for five years.**

The word **for** tells us the total amount of time — five years.

Common Time Expressions Used with "For"

Time Expression	Example Sentence
for two days	I have had this cold for two days.
for a week	She has been on holiday for a week.
for three months	He has worked here for three months.
for six years	We have lived in this house for six years.
for a long time	They have known each other for a long time.
for ten minutes	I've been on the phone for ten minutes.
for ages	She hasn't visited us for ages.

Remember: *For* is always followed by a **number or quantity of time** — minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, or years.

Using "Since" with the Present Perfect

We use **since** to talk about a **point in time** — the moment when something started.

Think of it this way: **since** answers the question "*From when?*" and tells us the **starting point**.

since + a point in time (a specific moment)

Look at this mini-situation:

My name is Sara. I started working at the café in January. I still work there today.

→ **I have worked at the café since January.**

The word **since** tells us exactly *when* the situation started — in January.

Common Time Expressions Used with "Since"

Time Expression	Example Sentence
since Monday	I have been busy since Monday.
since this morning	She has been awake since this morning.
since January	He has studied French since January.
since 2015	We have lived here since 2015.
since last year	They have had a dog since last year.
since I was a child	I've loved music since I was a child.
since my birthday	She has been happy since her birthday.

Remember: *Since* is always followed by a **specific point in time** — a day, a month, a year, or an event.

The Key Difference: For vs Since

This is the most important thing to understand. Let's look at the difference clearly.

	For	Since
Used for	A period (length) of time	A point (start) in time
Answers	"How long?"	"From when?"
Followed by	A duration: two hours, six months, a week	A specific moment: 2020, Monday, last year
Example	I've known her for three years.	I've known her since 2021.

A helpful way to remember:

- **For** = a block of time (like a piece of cake — it has a size)
- **Since** = a moment on a timeline (like an arrow pointing to the start)

For and Since: Side-by-Side Examples

Look at these sentence pairs. Both sentences have the same meaning, but one uses **for** and one uses **since**.

Using "For"	Using "Since"
I've lived here for five years.	I've lived here since 2019.
She has worked at the school for two months.	She has worked at the school since September.
They've been married for ten years.	They've been married since 2014.
He has had that car for a long time.	He has had that car since he was young.
We've known each other for six months.	We've known each other since March.

Negative Sentences with For and Since

We can also use **for** and **since** in negative present perfect sentences. A **negative sentence** means we say something has NOT happened.

To make it negative, we add **not** after **have / has**. The short forms are **haven't** and **hasn't**.

- I **haven't** seen my cousin for three months.
- She **hasn't** called me since last Tuesday.
- They **haven't** visited us since Christmas.
- He **hasn't** eaten anything for six hours.

Questions with For and Since

We can also ask questions using **how long** with the present perfect. The answer often uses **for** or **since**.

How long + have/has + subject + past participle?

- **How long have you lived here?** — I've lived here *for* two years. / I've lived here *since* 2022.
- **How long has she worked there?** — She's worked there *for* six months. / She's worked there *since* April.
- **How long have they been friends?** — They've been friends *for* a long time. / They've been friends *since* school.

Common Mistakes

Here are some mistakes that learners often make with **for** and **since**. Study them carefully!

✗ I have lived here since five years.

✓ I have lived here for five years. (Five years is a period of time, not a point — use *for*.)

✗ She has worked here for 2020.

✓ She has worked here since 2020. (2020 is a year — a point in time — use *since*.)

✗ I know him for three years.

✓ I have known him for three years. (We need the present perfect *have/has + past participle*, not the

simple present.)

✗ They live here since last year.

✓ **They have lived here since last year.** (Always use the present perfect with *since* in this structure.)

✗ He has been sick since two weeks.

✓ **He has been sick for two weeks.** (Two weeks is a duration — use *for*.)

✗ I haven't seen her since a long time.

✓ **I haven't seen her for a long time.** (A long time is a period — use *for*.)

Special Case: Since with a Clause

Sometimes **since** is followed by a short sentence (a clause), not just a single word or date. This is more common at higher levels, but it is good to recognise it at A2.

- I've been happy **since I met her**.
- He's been tired **since he started his new job**.
- She has loved animals **since she was a child**.

Notice that after **since**, the verb in the clause is usually in the **past simple** (met, started, was).

Present Perfect with For and Since: Quick Summary

Let's look at the key points from this lesson:

- The **present perfect** is formed with **have / has + past participle**.
- We use it to talk about situations that **started in the past and continue now**.
- We use **for** with a **period of time** (e.g., for two hours, for six months, for a long time).
- We use **since** with a **point in time** (e.g., since Monday, since 2018, since last year).
- The question **How long have / has ...?** asks about duration and the answer uses **for** or **since**.
- Negative sentences use **haven't** or **hasn't** + past participle.

Word	Use with	Example
For	A period of time (how long)	I've studied English for two years.
Since	A point in time (from when)	I've studied English since 2022.

Now practise **present perfect with for and since** in the exercises below.

Present Perfect: For, Since – Practice Test

A2 | 30 Questions: Multiple Choice, Fill-in-the-Gap & Fill-in-the-Blank

Part 1: Multiple Choice (Questions 1–10)

1 I have lived in this city ____ 2015.

- A** for
- B** since
- C** ago
- D** during

2 She has worked at the school ____ three years.

- A** since
- B** ago
- C** for
- D** from

3 They have been friends ____ they were children.

- A** for
- B** during
- C** since
- D** in

4 He has not eaten anything ____ six hours.

- A** since
- B** for
- C** from
- D** by

5 We have known each other ____ January.

- A** for
- B** during
- C** ago
- D** since

6 My brother has had his dog ____ two years.

- A** since
- B** for
- C** ago
- D** at

7 I have not seen her ____ last Monday.

- A** for
- B** during
- C** since
- D** in

8 They have lived here ____ a long time.

- A** since
- B** ago
- C** for
- D** from

9 She has been sick ____ Monday.

- A** for
- B** since
- C** during
- D** by

10 He has played football ____ five years.

- A** since
- B** during
- C** for
- D** at

Part 2: Fill in the Gap (Questions 11–20)

11 I have lived in this city ____ 2015.

- A** since
- B** for
- C** ago

12 She has worked at the school ____ three years.

- A** for
- B** since
- C** from

13 They have known each other ____ they were children.

- A** since
- B** for
- C** during

14 He has not eaten anything ____ six hours.

- A** for
- B** since
- C** in

15 We have been friends ____ last summer.

- A** since
- B** for
- C** by

16 My parents have lived in Canada ____ a long time.

- A** for
- B** since
- C** until

17 I haven't seen Tom ____ Monday.

- A** since
- B** for
- C** ago

18 She has been sick ____ two days.

- A** for
- B** since
- C** from

19 He has played the guitar ____ he was ten years old.

- A** since
- B** for
- C** while

20 They have not called us ____ many weeks.

- A** for
- B** since
- C** during

Part 3: Fill in the Blank (Questions 21–30)

21 She has lived in Paris _____ three years.

22 I have known my best friend _____ 2018.

23 They have been married _____ ten years.

24 He has worked at that company _____ Monday.

25 We have not seen each other _____ a long time.

26 My sister has had her cat _____ she was a child.

27 I _____ in this city for five years.

28 Tom has played football _____ he was six years old.

29 They _____ anything since breakfast.

30 She has been tired _____ the whole week.

Answer Key & Explanations

Present Perfect: For, Since | A2

Part 1: Multiple Choice

1. **B** Correct Answer: since ✓ Explanation: We use since with a specific point in time, like a year or date. Since 2015 tells us when something started.
2. **C** Correct Answer: for ✓ Explanation: We use for with a period of time, like three years, two months, or a long time.
3. **C** Correct Answer: since ✓ Explanation: We use since before a clause or a point in the past when something started. Since they were children is a starting point.
4. **B** Correct Answer: for ✓ Explanation: We use for with a length of time. Six hours is a duration, not a specific point in time.
5. **D** Correct Answer: since ✓ Explanation: We use since with a specific month or time in the past. Since January tells us when the relationship started.
6. **B** Correct Answer: for ✓ Explanation: We use for with a period of time. Two years is a length of time, so we use for, not since.
7. **C** Correct Answer: since ✓ Explanation: We use since with a specific past time like last Monday. It shows when something stopped or started.
8. **C** Correct Answer: for ✓ Explanation: A long time is a period of time, so we use for. We use since only with a specific point in the past.
9. **B** Correct Answer: since ✓ Explanation: Monday is a specific day in the past, so we use since. Since shows the starting point of a situation.
10. **C** Correct Answer: for ✓ Explanation: We use for with a duration of time like five years. We use since with a starting point like 2019 or last year.

Part 2: Fill in the Gap

11. **A** Correct Answer: since ✓ Explanation: We use since with a specific point in time, like a year. I have lived in this city since 2015.
12. **A** Correct Answer: for ✓ Explanation: We use for with a period of time, like three years. She has worked at the school for three years.
13. **A** Correct Answer: since ✓ Explanation: We use since before a clause or event in the past. They have known each other since they were children.

14. **A** Correct Answer: for ✓ Explanation: We use for with a duration of time, like six hours. He has not eaten anything for six hours.
15. **A** Correct Answer: since ✓ Explanation: We use since with a specific past time, like last summer. We have been friends since last summer.
16. **A** Correct Answer: for ✓ Explanation: We use for with expressions of duration like a long time. My parents have lived in Canada for a long time.
17. **A** Correct Answer: since ✓ Explanation: We use since with a specific day or point in time, like Monday. I haven't seen Tom since Monday.
18. **A** Correct Answer: for ✓ Explanation: We use for to show how long something has lasted, like two days. She has been sick for two days.
19. **A** Correct Answer: since ✓ Explanation: We use since before a past event or age. He has played the guitar since he was ten years old.
20. **A** Correct Answer: for ✓ Explanation: We use for with a period of time like many weeks. They have not called us for many weeks.

Part 3: Fill in the Blank

21. **for** Correct Answer: for ✓ Explanation: We use for with a period of time (e.g., three years, two days). for three years tells us how long something has lasted.
22. **since** Correct Answer: since ✓ Explanation: We use since with a point in time (e.g., 2018, Monday, January). since 2018 tells us when something started.
23. **for** Correct Answer: for ✓ Explanation: We use for to show a duration. ten years is a period of time, so we use for.
24. **since** Correct Answer: since ✓ Explanation: We use since before a specific day or date. Monday is a point in time, so we use since.
25. **for** Correct Answer: for ✓ Explanation: We use for with expressions like a long time, a few months, or two weeks because they describe a length of time.
26. **since** Correct Answer: since ✓ Explanation: We use since before a clause or a point in time. since she was a child shows when the situation started.
27. **have lived|'ve lived** Correct Answer: have lived / 've lived ✓ Explanation: We use the present perfect (have + past participle) with for and since to show something that started in the past and is still true. have lived is the present perfect of live.

28. **since** Correct Answer: since ✓ Explanation: We use since to show the starting point of an action. since he was six years old tells us when Tom started playing football.

29. **have not eaten|haven't eaten** Correct Answer: have not eaten / haven't eaten ✓ Explanation: We use have not + past participle to make a negative present perfect sentence. since breakfast shows the starting point, so the present perfect is needed.

30. **for** Correct Answer: for ✓ Explanation: We use for with a period of time. the whole week describes a duration, not a specific point in time, so we use for.

Score Guide

27–30 Correct Excellent! You have mastered this topic.

23–26 Correct Very good! Review the rules you missed.

18–22 Correct Good start. Re-read the lesson and examples.

0–17 Correct Study the lesson again before retaking the test.