

HOW LONG...?

B1 | Teens / Adults | Grammar Reference

Ask about **length of time**. When an activity or situation started in the past and continues now, use the **present perfect**.

1. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN ...ING?

How long + have/has + subject + been + verb-ing ...?

Use this for an activity continuing up to now, such as learning, working or waiting.

How long have you been learning English?

I've been learning English **for two years**.

How long has she been waiting?

She's been waiting **since ten o'clock**.

2. HOW LONG HAVE YOU ...?

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

Use this for states that continue now. The past participle is **not always -ed**:

live - lived; know - known; have - had; be - been.

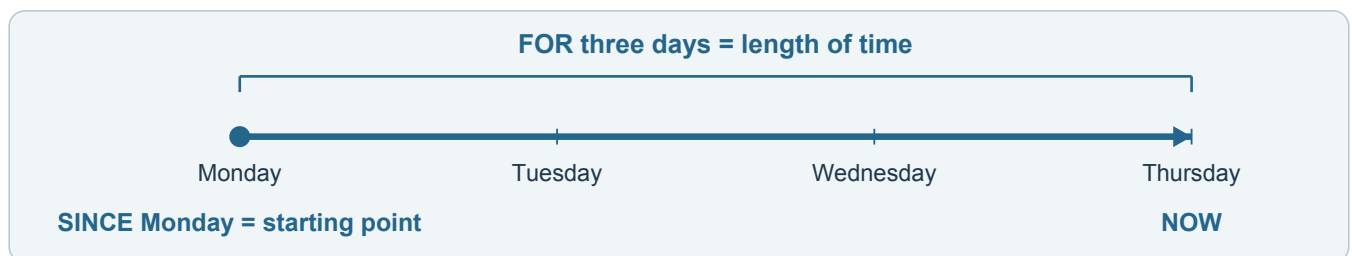
How long have you known Sam? I've known him **since we were children**.

How long have you had this phone? I've had it **for six months**.

With **live** and **work**, both forms are often possible:

How long have you lived here? / **How long have you been living here?**

3. ANSWER WITH FOR OR SINCE



4. NEGATIVES: I HAVEN'T ... FOR / SINCE

Subject + haven't/hasn't + past participle + for/since ...

This describes a period up to now when something **has not happened**.

I haven't done any exercise for a week.

I haven't seen Sam since Friday.

She hasn't played tennis since she hurt her knee.

How long have you been playing tennis? asks about an ongoing activity.

I haven't played for a month. means no tennis during the last month.

REMEMBER

Say **I've known her for years**, not "I've been knowing her".

Say **since Monday**, not "since three days"; say **for three days**.

For a finished period, use the past simple: **How long did you live in Rome?**