

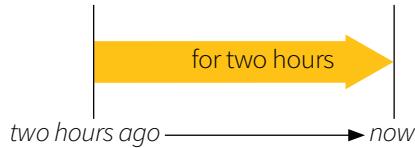
for and since when ... ? and how long ... ?

A

We use **for** and **since** to say how long something has been happening.

We use **for** + a period of time:

- ☐ We've been waiting **for two hours**.



for		
two hours	a long time	a week
20 minutes	six months	ages
five days	50 years	years

- ☐ Sally has been working here **for six months**. (*not since six months*)
- ☐ I haven't seen Tom **for three days**.

We use **since** + the start of a period:

- ☐ We've been waiting **since 8 o'clock**.



since		
8 o'clock	April	lunchtime
Monday	2001	we arrived
12 May	Christmas	I got up

- ☐ Sally has been working here **since April**. (= from April until now)
- ☐ I haven't seen Tom **since Monday**.

B

We often leave out **for** (but not usually in negative sentences):

- ☐ They've been married **for ten years**. or They've been married **ten years**.
- ☐ They **haven't had** a holiday **for** ten years. (you need **for**)

You can use **in** instead of **for** in negative sentences (**I haven't ... etc.**):

- ☐ They **haven't had** a holiday **in ten years**. (= **for** ten years)

We do *not* use **for** + **all ...** (**all day** / **all my life** etc.):

- ☐ I've lived here **all my life**. (*not for all my life*)

C

Compare **when ... ?** (+ *past simple*) and **how long ... ?** (+ *present perfect*):



- A: **When** did it start raining?
 B: It started raining **an hour ago** / **at 1 o'clock**.
- A: **How long** has it been raining?
 B: It's been raining **for an hour** / **since 1 o'clock**.



- A: **When** did Joe and Kate first meet?
 B: They first met { **a long time ago**.
 when they were at school.
- A: **How long** have they known each other?
 B: They've known each other { **for a long time**.
 since they were at school.

D

We say:

it's (= it is)	a long time	since something happened
or it's been (= it has been)	six months (<i>etc.</i>)	

- ☐ **It's two years since** I last saw Joe. or **It's been two years since ...**
 (= I **haven't seen** Joe for two years)
- ☐ **It's ages since** we went to the cinema. or **It's been ages since ...**
 (= We **haven't been** to the cinema for ages)
- ☐ **How long is it since** Mrs Hill died? or **How long has it been since ...**
 (= when did she die?)

Exercises

12.1 Write **for** or **since**.

- 1 It's been raining since lunchtime.
- 2 Paul has lived in Brazil ten years.
- 3 I'm tired of waiting. We've been sitting here an hour.
- 4 Kevin has been looking for a job he left school.
- 5 I haven't been to a party ages.
- 6 I wonder where Joe is. I haven't seen him last week.
- 7 Jane is away on holiday. She's been away Friday.
- 8 The weather is dry. It hasn't rained a few weeks.

12.2 Look at each answer and choose the right question.

- | | | |
|---|--|---------------------|
| 1 | How long have they been married?
When did they get married?
(When did they get married? <i>is correct</i>) | Ten years ago. |
| 2 | How long have you had this car?
When did you buy this car? | About five years. |
| 3 | How long have you been waiting?
When did you get here? | Only a few minutes. |
| 4 | How long have you been doing your course?
When did your course start? | September. |
| 5 | How long has Anna been in London?
When did Anna arrive in London? | Last week. |
| 6 | How long have you known each other?
When did you first meet each other? | A long time. |

12.3 Read the situations and complete the sentences.

- 1 It's raining. It's been raining since lunchtime. It started raining at lunchtime.
- 2 Ann and Jess are friends. They first met years ago. They've known each other for years.
- 3 Mark is unwell. He became ill on Sunday. He has Sunday.
- 4 Sarah is married. She's been married for a year. She got
- 5 You have a headache. It started when you woke up.
I've I woke up.
- 6 Sue is in a meeting at work. It's been going on since 9 o'clock.
The meeting at 9 o'clock.
- 7 You're working in a hotel. You started working there six months ago.
I've been
- 8 Kate is learning Japanese. She's been doing this for a long time.
Kate started

12.4 Complete B's sentences.

- | | |
|--|---|
| A
1 Do you often go on holiday?
2 Have you seen Lisa recently?
3 Do you still go swimming regularly?
4 Do you still ride a bike these days? | B
No, I <u>haven't had a holiday for</u> five years.
No, I about a month.
No, I a long time.
No, I ages. |
|--|---|

Now write B's answers again. This time use **It's ... since ...**.

- 5 (1) No, it's five years since I last had a holiday.
- 6 (2) No, it's
- 7 (3) No,
- 8 (4)