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Paul Emmerson

Intermediate to Upper-intermediate

Business Grammar Builder

SECOND EDITION
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A  Past simple or present perfect?

The past simple is used to describe actions in a completed time period.
The present perfect is used when the time period includes the present.

I lived in Milan many years ago.
(completed: now I live in another place)

I’ve lived in Milan since 2008.
(a situation that started in the past and continues in the present: I still live there)

I’ve been to Milan several times.
(life experience)

My boss has agreed to your proposal.
(present result of a past action)

Time phrases used with the past simple (unit 3C) refer to a particular point in the past: yesterday, last month.

Time phrases used with the present perfect (unit 5C) link the past to the present: since, never, this month.

The choice of tense often depends on the situation and where our attention is.

Good news! We’ve won the contract!
(recent news: the event is present in my mind)

So, we won the contract, and then ...
(telling a story: the event feels distant in my mind)

B  Present simple or present perfect?

The present simple is used for permanent facts and states, and regular habits.
The present perfect makes a connection between past and present.

I work here.
(a permanent state: I work here every day)

I’ve worked here for two years.
(I started two years ago and still work here now)

C  Present perfect continuous: form

The present perfect continuous is formed with the present perfect of be, and the -ing form of the verb. Negatives are formed with not.

I’ve been (haven’t been) waiting here for more than an hour.
She’s been (hasn’t been) waiting here for ages.

Questions are formed by inverting the subject and have.

Have you been waiting long?
Has she been waiting long?

D  Present perfect continuous: uses

The present perfect continuous describes an action or situation in progress from the past up to the present.

Production at this site has been increasing steadily since we started here five years ago.
The present perfect continuous often emphasizes the length of time of the action.

I’ve been working on this report all week.
The present perfect continuous can be used for repeated actions.

I’ve been calling her all afternoon, but she’s always in a meeting.
The action may be finished or continuing; we only know by the situation.

You’re late! I’ve been waiting here for ages!
(the waiting is finished now)

I’ve been waiting for ages. Where is she?
(I will continue waiting)

E  Present perfect continuous: time expressions

Typical time expressions used with the present perfect continuous include: all day, for months, for ages, recently, over the last few years, since, for.

F  Present perfect or present perfect continuous?

Sometimes there is no difference in meaning between the present perfect and present perfect continuous.

I’ve worked/ been working here for two years.
The choice of tense often depends on where our attention is.
We use the present perfect if our attention is on the present result.

I’ve written the report. Here it is.
(the finished report is in my mind)

We use the present perfect continuous if our attention is on the action in progress.

I’ve been writing the report. I’m exhausted.
(the act of writing is in my mind)

If we give details of how many or how much, we do not use a continuous form.

I’ve written three reports this week.
I’ve done a lot of research on this company.

See page 243 for an overview of the English verb tense system.
Exercises

Sections A, B 6.1 Underline the correct words.
1 Yesterday I phoned/I’ve phoned the bank about our overdraft.
2 I work/I have worked here since the end of last year.
3 I work/I have worked from home one day a week.
4 I’m enjoying the conference. I made/I have made a lot of useful contacts.
5 I saw/I’ve seen Hugh Hopper a few days ago – he sends his regards.
6 We went/We have been to an interesting seminar last week.
7 Today has been/was really busy – and it’s only lunchtime!
8 Today has been/was really busy. It’s 7 pm – I’m going home.
9 I’m sorry but Patricia left/has left the office an hour ago.
10 Patricia? No, she isn’t here right now. She left/has left the office.

Sections A, B 6.2 Put the verbs in brackets into either the present simple, past simple or present perfect.
1 The company is doing very well. Last year sales went up (go up) 15%, and so far this year they have gone up (go up) another 12%.
2 We operate (we/operate) all over Latin America. Recently we set up (set up) branches in Peru and Colombia.
3 (you/see) my laptop? I’m sure I leave (leave) it here earlier.
4 This not look (not look) like the right block. Are you sure we come (come) to the right address?
5 I (never/speak) to him, but I (speak) to his assistant on the phone yesterday.
6 I work (I/work) for WorldCom since last year, but now I want (I/want) to change jobs. (you/hear) of anyone taking on new staff?

Sections C, D, F 6.3 In each mini-dialogue put one verb into the present perfect simple and the other into the present perfect continuous. Use contractions where possible.
1 A: What’s the matter? You look worried!
   B: Yes, I am. I’ve been looking at (look at) the contract in detail, and I’ve noticed (notice) a lot of potential problems.
2 A: I call (call) Carol all day, but it goes straight to voicemail.
   B: I expect she goes to (go to) Head Office.
3 A: ‘Tosca’ is coming to the Opera House. (you see) it?
   B: Not yet, but I look forward (look forward) to it for ages.
   Shall we go together?
4 A: How long you produce (you/produce) cars at this site?
   B: About four years. We invest (invest) around twenty million dollars in plant and machinery.

“Oh, and your feelings have been trying to get in touch with you.”

VERB TENSES 31
Exercises

Section A 6.4 Put the verbs into the correct form of the past simple or present perfect simple. Use contractions where possible.

**VICTORIA:** Hi, Sue. I 1 **haven’t seen** (not/see) you for ages!
**SUE:** Hi, Victoria, nice to see you again. No, you’re right, I 2 **haven’t been** (not/be) in touch with anyone recently.

**VICTORIA:** So what have you been up to?
**SUE:** You know I 3 **left** (leave) my job in January so that I could go freelance as a graphic designer?

**VICTORIA:** Yes, I remember you 4 **told** (talk) a lot about that last year.
**SUE:** Well, it 5 **has been** (be) a really difficult year so far. I 6 **haven’t done** (never/do) anything like this before and it’s much harder than I 7 **imagined** (imagine). 8 **Have you** (you/ever/be) self-employed?

**VICTORIA:** No, never, although I 9 **often think** (often/think) about it. So why 10 **is it** (it/be) so difficult?
**SUE:** There’s a lot of insecurity. At the beginning I 11 **had** (have) two or three good clients. These are people that I 12 **know** (know) for many years. They’re still with me. But apart from that nothing really.

**VICTORIA:** What about advertising in the specialist magazines?
**SUE:** Yes, I 13 **did** (already/do) that. I 14 **put** an advert in *Design Monthly* a couple of months ago but there were only a few replies. But I have a new website and I’m quite optimistic about using it to generate business. I 15 **finished** (finish) it just last week. It’s optimized for search engines so that people can find me more easily. I 16 **have** (have) quite a few hits already, so things might improve soon.

Section A 6.5 Complete the text about technology stocks by putting the verbs into the correct form of the past simple or present perfect.

**MARKET REPORT** a rocky road for tech stocks

European investors 1 **have watched** (watch) US stock markets nervously over the last few months. The problems with US technology and telecomms stocks 2 **began** (begin) last March, and since then share prices at companies like Intel, HP and Apple 3 **crashed** (crash). Over the summer all these giants 4 **announced** (announce) lower than expected profits, and investors fear that in the current economic climate demand for their products 5 **peaked** (peak). Now it’s the turn of European stocks, and on Monday stocks in Germany’s SAP and Finland’s Nokia 6 **fell** sharply. SAP 7 **is** down 4%.

But there was some good news for investors yesterday. Capgemini 8 **released** (release) figures which showed that this year revenues 9 **rose** (rise) to €9.100 million, up from €8.700 million last year. In recent years Capgemini 10 **became** (become) one of the leading players in the global IT services market, alongside IBM, EDS and Accenture. The company 11 **leads** (also/lead) the way in the use of offshoring, often transferring work to countries such as India and Poland. This 12 **has improved** (improve) profitability as well as providing a wider range of options in the event of a sudden change in the market.
Tasks

Speaking: listen and repeat
1  You are going to hear eight phrases. Listen and repeat.

Translate
2  Translate these short texts taken from the Internet into your own language. Remember not to translate word for word, but rather to make it sound natural.

The technology-heavy Nasdaq index has been falling for three weeks, and is now 34% lower than its March peak. Shares of companies announcing poor results have fallen by a third or a half after profits warnings.

Since completing a consolidation phase three years ago, ThyssenKrupp has been following a sustained and profitable course of growth. The company has raised its earnings forecast for the current fiscal year to over €3.2 billion before taxes.

Writing: personalized practice
3  Think about your life in the last year. Write answers to these questions using the past simple, present perfect simple and present perfect continuous.

1 How have you tried to keep fit and healthy?
   I’ve joined a health club. I went a few times after joining, but since then I haven’t been at all. Also I’ve been trying to eat more healthy food. I don’t really have much time for cooking, but I’ve learned a few new recipes.

2 How have you spent your money?

3 What have you done to keep up with new ideas in your professional field?

4 Have you been anywhere interesting?

5 What haven’t you done that you would like to have done? Why?

Rehearsal for the real world
4  Look again at the dialogue in exercise 6.4 and notice how the speakers use the past simple and the present perfect. Now write a similar dialogue between yourself and a friend or colleague who you meet after not being in contact for some time. Start like this:

Friend (give their name): Hi! I haven’t see you for ages!
Me: Hi, nice to see you again.

If you are working in class, read some dialogues aloud.
Developing an argument 1

A  Linking across sentences
Units 41 and 42 gave short, everyday words to join parts of a sentence. We can use longer, more formal words and phrases to link across sentences and within more complex sentences. Look at the examples below for and, but and so:

and:  In addition, Besides, Moreover, Furthermore
but:  However, Nevertheless, On the other hand
so:   Therefore, Consequently, As a result

These words are typical of careful speech (e.g. presentations) and writing. They usually come at the start of a sentence and have a comma afterwards, but can come after a comma in the middle of a sentence.

Supplier A is cheaper and has good delivery times. However, supplier B has better quality and is more flexible with volume.

This new process produces less waste, and as a result it’s much better for the environment.

B  Numbering points and concluding: firstly, in addition, finally, overall, in conclusion
We can use First/Firstly/First of all to begin a list of points. For other points we say Second/Secondly/Third/Thirdly, etc.

To add a point without numbering we can say In addition, As well as this or Besides this.

To finish the points we can say Finally.

Why choose the Czech Republic? Well, first of all, it has a trained, flexible and relatively inexpensive workforce. As well as this, it has a good location in Central Europe near to key markets.

Finally, it has good infrastructure.

To conclude one particular discussion point we can say Overall or Taking everything into consideration.

So, overall, things are improving.

To finish and conclude more formally we can say In conclusion.

In conclusion, I’d like to thank you all very much for coming here today.

C  Examples: for example, for instance, such as
We can use for example or for instance.

Our costs have gone up. For instance, the cost of steel has nearly doubled.

Our costs have gone up. The cost of steel, for example, has nearly doubled.

We use such as in the middle of a sentence to give examples. It is the same as ‘like’. Such as is followed by a noun phrase, not a whole clause.

Some delays are beyond our control, such as strikes or bad weather.

D  True but surprising: in fact, actually
We use In fact, Actually or As a matter of fact to say what is really true, when this is surprising or different to what people think.

We have plenty in stock. In fact, we could deliver tomorrow. (surprising)

I thought we had some in stock, but actually we don’t. (different)

E  Alternatives: either … or, instead of
We use either to begin a list of possibilities. We do not begin with or.

Either we could cancel the launch, or we could simply postpone it. (NOT Or we could …, or we could …)

We use instead (of) to mean ‘in the place of something else’. At the end of a sentence, instead is used without of.

Can we meet on Friday instead of Thursday?
Instead of Thursday, can we meet on Friday?
Can we meet on Friday instead?

F  Exceptions: except for, apart from
We use except, except for, with the exception of or apart from to mean ‘not including’.

I contacted everyone except (for) Irina.

G  Generalizing: in general, on the whole
To talk generally we can say: In general, On the whole, As a rule, Typically, Broadly speaking.

In general, large public companies have key relationships: customers, business partners, suppliers, employees and shareholders.

If we want to make a balanced argument, we often use one of these phrases followed by a word like but + a contrasting idea.

On the whole, I think you’re right, although I disagree with you about the level of risk.

As a rule, we usually ask for an upfront payment on a first-time order. However, I think we can be flexible on that.

H  Summarizing: so, basically, to sum up
To summarize quickly we can use So, Basically, In short and To put it simply. To summarize more formally we can use To sum up and In summary.

Basically, the whole idea is ridiculous.
So, to sum up, I’ve looked at three main issues in my presentation. First, …
**Exercises**

43.1 **Underline the correct words.**

1. If you don’t want the Canon, what about this Panasonic instead/instead of?
2. The fall in share prices has made investors nervous. On the other side/hand, it could be an excellent buying opportunity.
3. As a rule/As a whole, I don’t normally have a big lunch, but I’ll come with you to the restaurant today.
4. All commodity prices rose last week, apart/except soybeans and wheat.
5. We can either/or wait for a train, or go by taxi.
6. I know Madrid very well. As a matter of fact/On the other hand, I worked there for a short time many years ago.
7. For instance/On the whole I am a supporter of the green movement. However, I think that they are wrong to oppose nuclear energy.
8. I like to drive to work because I can go door-to-door. On the other hand/Besides, the train would probably be quicker.
9. I like to drive to work because I can go door-to-door. On the other hand/Besides, the company pays for my petrol.
10. Investment in areas for example/such as biotechnology can be risky.
11. Investment in some areas, for example/such as biotechnology, can be risky.
12. The résumés are all very strong, except for instead of these two here.

43.2 **Complete the sentences with the words or phrases in the box.**

actually moreover either except in general instead nevertheless so such as therefore

1. People think it’s expensive, but actually over the long term it isn’t.
2. The restaurant is open every day moreover Monday.
3. She is out of the country and nevertheless, unable to attend the meeting.
4. I was going on Tuesday, but now I’m going on Monday.
5. Therefore, I think the meeting went very well, although we didn’t manage to agree on a budget for next year.
6. Some areas, except recruitment, are outsourced to other companies.
7. I’m sorry, I’ve had enough so he goes, or I go.
8. It’s reliable, safe and easy to use. such as, it’s excellent value for money.
9. It’s reliable, safe and easy to use. such as, the maintenance costs can be quite high.
10. In short, in short, we offer a full range of insurance products to both corporate and private clients.

43.3 **Put four commas in this short paragraph.**

In general taking an MBA is a good idea for an ambitious young professional. However you do have to make some sacrifices. You miss out on two years’ valuable work experience for example and it can be very expensive.
Exercises

43.4 Read this article about traffic in city centres. Complete the article by choosing the best alternative from A, B, C or D below.

Want to enter the city? Sorry, you’ll have to pay.

Traffic congestion in city centres is a big problem for both businesses and residents. Policy makers are being forced to think of solutions based on public transport, road pricing and restricted use of various kinds. What are the reasons for this? 1 B, cars cause noise and pollution in areas where people walk, shop or go sightseeing. 2 this, they require parking areas, and space in city centres is limited. And 3 , cars cause traffic jams and 4 many hours of work time are lost. 5 , people do like the freedom and convenience of using their own car, and alternatives are often unavailable or of poor quality. What can be done? Public transport has to become more reliable and more comfortable. 6 , bicycle use should be encouraged – 7 , by having more cycle lanes. Some large cities, 8 , Cologne and Amsterdam, are already organized in this way. But the most radical measure is road pricing. Asking motorists to pay to enter city centres is controversial, but is an increasingly common solution. So, 9 , we can see that imaginative and sometimes unpopular measures will be needed to make the city centre a more pleasant place to work and live.

1 A As well B First of all C In fact D As a result
2 A Besides B Also C For example D Except
3 A for example B however C instead D finally
4 A either B both C as a result D instead of
5 A However B Therefore C Actually D So
6 A To sum up B In addition C actually D for example
7 A on the whole B in addition C instead of D instead
8 A such as B as well as C actually D except
9 A thirdly B as well as C instead D also

43.5 Complete this speech made by the leader of a Korean trade delegation in Slovakia with the words and phrases in the box.

as a rule first of all however in addition in conclusion in fact instead of therefore

Could I just say a few words? Thank you. Well, 1 first of all I’d like to thank everyone here at the Bratislava Chamber of Commerce for organizing our short tour of Slovakia. We have enjoyed looking round all the factories and meeting the employees. 2 , I would like to thank the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, who made the whole trip possible. As you know, we see the European market as very important for our company. 3 , it is central to our future plans. 4 , I look forward to a close cooperation between our two countries in the future. 5 , I think it’s better to keep the ceremonies short on occasions like this. 6 , I would just like to take this opportunity to leave you with something to remember our visit. I have great pleasure in presenting this book with photographs of Korea to Mr Telensky, who took such good care of us. 7 , I hope that we may have the pleasure of welcoming some of you to our country in the near future. Perhaps the next time we meet it will be in Seoul 8 Bratislava! Once again, thank you all very much.
Tasks

Speaking: listen and repeat

1 You are going to hear eight phrases. Listen and repeat.

Translate

2 Translate these short texts taken from the Internet into your own language. Remember not to translate word for word, but rather to make it sound natural.

As a result of the reforms in the area of banking, trade, and investment, the economy grew significantly and achieved high annual growth rates. In fact, last year the economy grew by 8%.

Asia Econ website

Researchers found that while underweight and extremely obese people die earlier than people of a normal weight, people who are slightly overweight actually live longer than those of a normal weight.

Reuters website

Writing: personalized practice

3 Complete the sentences with your own ideas.

1 I’ve divided my presentation into three parts. First of all I’m going to give you an overview of the company and its product range. Secondly, I’m going to _____________________________. And finally I’ll _____________________________. If you have any questions, please feel free to interrupt.

2 As you can see, our products offer excellent value for money. As well as this, ________

3 Our costs have gone up significantly this year. For instance, _____________________________.

4 Some delays are beyond our control, such as _____________________________.

5 We have a lot of experience in this market. In fact, _____________________________.

6 I thought that working in a cross-cultural team would present some challenges, but actually _____________________________.

7 At the rate we’re working we’re not going to meet the project deadline. The way I see it we have two options. Either we _____________________________, or we _____________________________.

8 Why don’t we outsource our recruitment process instead of _____________________________?

9 The planning for the conference is all complete, except for _____________________________.

10 In general I think that _____________________________, although _____________________________.

11 Yes, I listened to everything she said. Basically, _____________________________.

12 So, to sum up, the main message that I want you to take away from this presentation is _____________________________.

LINKING WORDS AND PHRASES

Developing an argument 1