

GRAMMAR: The Present Perfect-Continuous.

Meaning 1. Duration.

I've been studying English for 10 years. He's been studying Physics since last year. She's been cooking for half an hour. How long have you been writing this letter?

I'm reading this book.	I	for two days.
She's cooking some pasta.	She	since 8 a.m.
He's listening to music.	He	for three hours.
They're learning some new words.	They	for a month.
We're dancing.	We	for a long time.
John is singing.	John	since we came here.
Mary's studying Spanish.	Mary	since she moved to Madrid.
My parents are having dinner.	My parents	for 15 minutes.

Meaning 2. WITHOUT duration such as "for two weeks": the tense has a more general meaning of "lately". We often use the words "lately" or "recently" to emphasize this meaning.

They've been working hard lately. How long have you been waiting? He has been living here for years. We have been reading many books lately.

to watch the TV news	I	lately.
to work for BBC	She	recently.
to swim in the lake	He	lately.
to play soccer	They	recently.
to write some postcards	We	lately.
to make an omelette	Anna	recently.
to draw a picture	My best friend	lately.
to travel around Holland	My friends	recently.

***Emphasize HOW THE PERSON SPENT TIME, ACTIVITY (Finished or Not?)**

He has been painting his bathroom. They've been doing their homework.

to use the exercise bicycle	I	
to watch some DVDs	She	
to relax	He	
to play squash	They	
to do a special training course	We	
to drive	Peter	
to walk in the park	My neighbour	
to see motor racing	My family	

***Emphasize ACTIVITY (done several times) She has been trying to phone her boss today.**

to try to phone Neo	I	
to try to stop smoking	She	
to try to relax	He	
to try to find the hotel	They	
to look for the motel	We	
to try to talk to John	Laura	
to try to find a good job	My brother-in-law	
to try to stop...	Myself	