

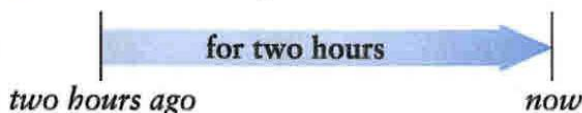
# For and since, When . . . ?, and How long . . . ?

**A**

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

We use **for** + a period of time (two hours, six weeks, etc.):

- I've been waiting **for two hours**.

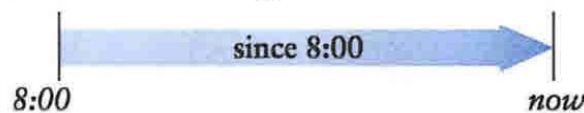


for		
two hours	a week	a long time
20 minutes	six months	ages
five days	50 years	years

- Kelly 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 (8:00, Monday, 1985, etc.):

- I've been waiting **since 8:00**.



since		
8:00	April	lunchtime
Monday	1977	I arrived
May 12	Christmas	yesterday

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

It is possible to leave out **for** (but not usually in negative sentences):

- They've been married (for) **ten years**. (with or without for)
- They haven't had a vacation **for ten years**. (you must use for)

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

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

**B**

Compare **When . . . ?** (+ *simple past*) and **How long . . . ?** (+ *present perfect*):



A: **When did it start raining?**

B: It started raining **an hour ago / at one o'clock**.

A: **How long has it been raining?**

B: It's been raining **for an hour / since one o'clock**.



A: **When did Joe and Carol meet each other?**

B: They first met **a long time ago / when they were in high school**.

A: **How long have Joe and Carol known each other?**

B: They've known each other **for a long time / since they were in high school**.

**C**

We say "It's (= It has) been a long time / two years (etc.) since something happened":

- It's been two years since I last saw Joe**. (= I haven't seen Joe for two years.)
- It's been ages since we went to the movies**. (= We haven't gone to the movies for ages.)

The question is **How long has it been since . . . ?**:

- How long has it been since you last saw Joe?** (= When did you last see Joe?)
- How long has it been since Mrs. Hill died?** (= When did Mrs. Hill die?)

# Exercises

## 12.1 Put in *for* or *since*.

1. It's been raining *since* \_\_\_\_\_ lunchtime.
2. Joe has lived in Dallas \_\_\_\_\_ 20 years.
3. Sarah has lived in Chicago \_\_\_\_\_ 1985.
4. I'm tired of waiting. I've been sitting here \_\_\_\_\_ an hour.
5. I haven't been to a party \_\_\_\_\_ a long time.
6. Christine is away. She's been away \_\_\_\_\_ Friday.
7. Kevin has been looking for a job \_\_\_\_\_ he finished school.
8. I wonder how Carol is. I haven't seen her \_\_\_\_\_ ages.

## 12.2 Write questions with *how long* and *when*.

1. It's raining.  
(how long?) *How long has it been raining?* \_\_\_\_\_  
(when?) *When did it start raining?* \_\_\_\_\_
2. Karen is studying Japanese.  
(how long?) \_\_\_\_\_  
(when / start?) \_\_\_\_\_
3. I know Chris.  
(how long?) \_\_\_\_\_  
(when / first / meet?) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Bob and Jessica are married.  
(how long?) \_\_\_\_\_  
(when?) \_\_\_\_\_

## 12.3 Read the situation and complete the sentences.

1. (It's raining now. It's been raining since lunchtime.) It started *raining at lunchtime* \_\_\_\_\_.
2. (Ann and Sue are friends. They met each other years ago.)  
They've *known each other for years* \_\_\_\_\_.
3. (Mark is sick. He became sick on Sunday.) He has \_\_\_\_\_.
4. (Mark is sick. He became sick a few days ago.) He has \_\_\_\_\_.
5. (Sarah is married. She's been married for two years.) She got \_\_\_\_\_.
6. (You have a camera. You bought it ten years ago.) I've \_\_\_\_\_.
7. (Megan has been in France for the last three weeks.) She went \_\_\_\_\_.
8. (You're working in a hotel. You started in June.) I've \_\_\_\_\_.

## 12.4 Write B's sentences using the words in parentheses.

1. A: Do you take vacations often?  
B: (no / five years) *No, I haven't taken a vacation for five years.* \_\_\_\_\_
2. A: Do you eat in restaurants often?  
B: (no / ages) No, I \_\_\_\_\_.
3. A: Do you see Laura often?  
B: (no / about a month) No, \_\_\_\_\_.
4. A: Do you go to the movies often?  
B: (no / a long time) \_\_\_\_\_.

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

5. *No, it's been five years since I took a vacation.* \_\_\_\_\_
6. No, it's \_\_\_\_\_.
7. No, \_\_\_\_\_.
8. \_\_\_\_\_.