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**The Duration Form and the Perfect & Continuous Aspect in English**

**Aspect** is a grammatical category related to how the meaning of **a verb structure** is understood **with relation to time**. In the English verb system, there are **2 aspects**: **perfect** and **continuous** (or progressive).

The **perfect aspect** in English is formed by the auxiliary verb ***have*** (in **past** or **present** or **future** preceded by modal verb ***will****)* ***+* past participle**) and is used to connect 2 moments in time, an earlier moment with a later moment:

* the past with the past: past perfect
* the past with the present: present perfect
* the past, the present or the future with the future: future perfect

So with the **duration form**, expressing an action or situation related to **a period of time** with **an initial moment** and **a later moment**, the **perfect aspect** is used.

The **continuous aspect** indicates a **situation in progress** at a particular time, so it may imply that it has a **limited duration**, that it is somewhat **temporary**/**transitory** and **not permanent**, that it is **not necessarily complete**. It is formed with the verb ***be*** ***+ -ing form***.

With the **duration form**, the perfect aspect can be used by itself (**perfect simple**) or in combination with the continuous aspect (**perfect continuous**). With **negative** sentences, the **perfect simple** (not continuous) is usually used (e.g. *I haven’t eaten meat for 2 weeks.).*

Unlike the **present perfect simple**, the **present perfect continuous** often suggests an action continuing into the present, or a temporary situation leading up to the present, not complete.

To say ***how long*** in English, ***for*** is used for a **period of time** (e.g. *for 3 months)*, while ***since*** is used with a **specific time reference** indicating the start of a time period (e.g. *since 8 March).*

For further explanations with examples, check an English grammar book.

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Instructions: Translate the following sentences into appropriate English.

1. Vivo a Firenze. **I live in Florence.**

2. Vivo a Firenze dal 1999. **I have lived in Florence since 1999.**

3. Vivo a Firenze da un mese. **I have been living in Florence for a month.**

4. Negli anni 80 studiavo all’Università di Cambridge.

**In the 1980s I studied/was studying at the University of Cambridge.**

5. Studiavo all’università da meno di un anno.

**I had been studying at the university for less than a year.**

6. Abitavo in città da 30 anni. **I had lived in town/in the city for 30 years.**

7. Il mese prossimo avrò vissuto qui da cinque anni.

**Next month I will have lived here for five years.**

8. Da quanto tempo vivi qui? **How long have you been living here?**

9. Per quanto tempo avrai vissuto qui, quando traslocherai la settimana prossima? **How long will you have lived/been living here, when you move next week?**

10. Non guardo la televisione da un mese. **I haven’t watched television for a month.**

11. Non guardi la televisione da questa mattina, spero.

**You haven’t been watching television since this morning, I hope.**

12. No, mamma, ho studiato. **No, mama/mom/mum, I’ve been studying.**

Mama: Originally from baby talk. 1st known use 1579. Possibly influenced by Middle English mome (“mother, aunt”), from Old English \*mōme, from Proto-West Germanic \*mōmā, from Proto-Germanic \*mōmǭ (“mother, aunt”), from Proto-Indo-European \*méh₂-méh₂, reduplication of \*méh₂- (“mother”), related to German Muhme (“aunt”), **Latin mamma** (“mother, nurse”), Irish mam (“mother”): Spanish mamá/Yoruba màmá/German/Yiddish/Dutch/Irish/Polish/Russian/Ewe/Hausa: mama

13. Non leggo un giornale da molto tempo.

**I haven’t read a newspaper in/for a long time.**

14. Lo conoscevo da molto tempo. **I had known/knew him for a long time.**

15. Ti aspetto da mezz’ora.

**I have been waiting for you (for) half an hour/a half (an) hour.**

16. Marilyn scrive poesia da quando aveva 15 anni.

**Marilyn has been writing poetry since (when) she was 15 (years old).**

17. Non nevicava in quel modo da quasi 25 anni.

**It had not snowed like that for almost 25 years.**

18. Ti sto telefonando dalle 7 di stamattina.

**I have been calling/phoning you since 7 this/in the morning.**

19. Lavoravamo da ore.  **We had worked/been working for hours.**

20. Costruiscono una casa nuova dall’estate scorsa.

**They have been building a new house since last summer.**

21. Cucinavo biscotti da tutto il pomeriggio.

**I had been baking cookies/biscuits all afternoon (long)/(for) the entire/whole afternoon.**

22. Quando finirai i tuoi esami, da quanto tempo avrai studiato l’inglese?

**When you finish your exams,** (for) **how long will you have been studying English** (for)**?**

23. Nessuno ci abitava da anni. **No one/Nobody had lived/had been living there for years.**

24. Giocano a tennis da più di tre ore ormai.

**They have been playing tennis for more than/over three hours by now/already.**

25. (Egli) Non gioca a calcio da più di un mese.

**He hasn’t played football for more than/over a month.**

26. Viaggiavamo da una settimana. **We had been traveling/travelling for a week.**

26. Leggo quel libro da giovedì sera.

**I have been reading that book since Thursday evening.**

27. Quando lascerò questa casa il mese prossimo, avrò vissuto qui 3 anni.

**When I leave this house next month, I will have lived/been living here (for) three years.**

28. Alla fine del mese, Amanda avrà lavorato in quella ditta da 13 anni. **At the end of the month, Amanda will have worked in/at that company/firm (for) 13 years.**

29. Se piove anche domani, sarà una settimana che piove. **If it also rains tomorrow, it will have been raining (for) a week/it will be a week that it has been raining.**

30. (Ella) Ha quell’orologio (da polso) da Natale. **She has had that watch since Christmas.**

31. Sono qui da venti minuti. **They/I have been here (for) twenty minutes.**

32. Vivo in questa città da quando sono nato.

**I have lived/been living in this city since/(from when) I was born.**

33. Da quanto tempo sei qui? **(For) How long have you been here (for)?**

34. Da quanto tempo studi inglese? **(For) How long have you been studying English (for)?**

35. Faceva una ricerca sul razzismo quando l’ho conosciuto per la prima volta.

**He was doing/undertaking/carrying out research on racism when I met him (for) the first time/first met him.**

36. Penso al loro progetto per il prossimo inverno e mi piace moltissimo. **I have been thinking about their project/plan for next winter and I like it very much/a lot.**

37. Non lo vedo da molto tempo e mi chiedo dove sia stato.

**I haven’t seen him for a long time/while and I wonder where he has been,**

38. Ti aspetto da tutto il giorno. **I’ve been waiting for you all day (long).**

39. Ho cominciato la primavera scorsa e domani l’avrò fatto da 10 mesi.

**I started/began last spring and tomorrow I will have been doing it for 10 months.**

40. La guerriglia vietnamita combatteva contro l’occupazione statunitense da più di 10 anni nelle montagne e nelle giungle quando vinse la guerra. **The Vietnamese guerrillas/gueri- las had been fighting against the U.S. occupation for more than 10 years in the mountains and (in the) jungles when they won the war.**