

Topic 1.1 Grammar Revision: Working with English verbs 1

Aims & Objectives

To understand how we use the perfect aspect in English & apply this in written and spoken production.

Introductionⁱ

Look at the two questions below. Discuss your answers with a partner. Provide at least two examples of luxuries/necessities from your own life.

What is a luxury?

What is a necessity?

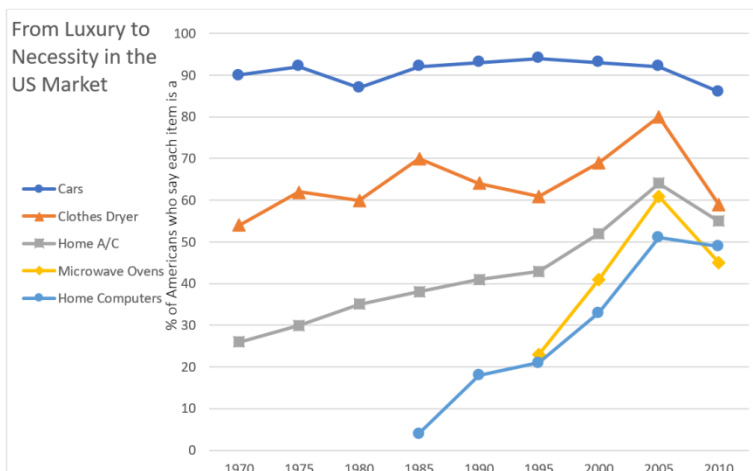
With your partner, use the two questions above to discuss the following. Decide if they are a necessity or a luxury.

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1 car | 4 microwave oven |
| 2 clothes dryer | 5 home computer |
| 3 home a/c | 6 internet access |

Changing trends

The graph below shows changes in people's ideas about what are luxuries and what are necessities. Discuss with a partner the following questions:

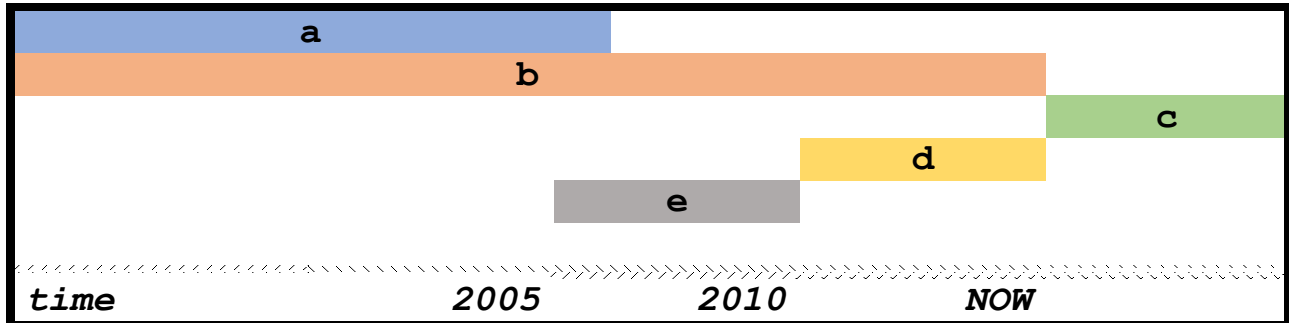
- What might the graph tell us about the health of the economy during the given period?
- The period between 2005 and 2010, there appears to be a significant change. What might have caused this?



Topic 1: The Perfect Aspect

Read the short text in the box, paying attention to the verbs in **bold**. Match the verbs in bold to the letters a – e on the timeline underneath the text.

What we consider to be a luxury **has changed** in sometimes unexpected ways over the years. Up until 2005, people's expectations of home comforts such as microwave ovens and clothes dryers **had been increasing** steadily. However, some time after 2005, the trend reversed and by 2010 the percentage of people considering these items a necessity **had fallen** to levels not previously seen since the 1970s. This downwards trend **has been continuing** and shows no sign of bottoming out. Though numbers of cars and computers do not fall as sharply in the data compared to air conditioning and clothes dryers, our attitude to these **will** probably **have changed** again in the next ten years.



Write the verbs in the box below:

a	
b	
c	
d	
e	

Grammar

Often, when we think about verbs, we think immediately about *tense* or when the action occurred: whether the past, present or future. However, there is another element, the *aspect*, which we use to communicate other “aspects” about time, such as whether the action is in progress (the *continuous* aspect) or completed (the *perfect aspect*). We use the perfect aspect in English to connect one point in time with an earlier point in time. This basically means:

- to connect the past with the present in some way;
- to chronologically relate two points in the past (the past with an older past);
- to look back from a future point to a completed action, also in the future.

Present perfect

Simple (HAVE + PAST PARTICIPLE)

To look back **from now** to states or actions connected **to now**. For example:

- Complete actions that are important to the present.
 - I have (just) collected the books from the library (I have the books now)
- States or actions that started in the past **and continue to the present** & with time expressions that mean ‘to now’.
 - I have worked at Unibz **since** 2012/**for** six years*
 - I have never been a football fan, so I don’t care about the Champions League.
- States or actions that **started in the past and continue to the present** & with time expressions that mean ‘to now’.
 - I have worked at Unibz **since** 2012/**for** six years*
 - I have never been a football fan, so I don’t care about the Champions League.
- States or actions that started in the past **and continue to the present** & with time expressions that mean ‘to now’.
 - I have never been a football fan, so I don’t care about the Champions League.
- With the time expressions ***just, already, yet, recently, for*** and ***since***.
 - I have worked at Unibz **since** 2012/**for** six years*¹
 - “Have you already finished the assignment?” “No, not yet”
- With stative verbs (have, know, be, etc.) for unfinished actions & states that started in the past and are true now.
 - How long have you known Alan?

¹ *(**For** – “quantity” of time, usually a number – think “4”. **Since** – a point in time)

Continuous (HAVE + BEEN + (VERB+ING))

This is for situations or actions that started in the past and are still continuing. This focuses on the ongoing, uncompleted nature of the action. We use this for:

- Temporary situations.
 - I've been waiting for the 10A for half an hour!
- Repeated actions.
 - I've been drinking far too much recently
- With the following time expressions: **for, since, recently, all day/week/month/year**.
 - We have been working in an office without heating for (the last) two weeks.

Practice: Present perfect 1

Choose the best option to complete the sentences below. Work together.

1. I haven't **had/been having** this book very long. In fact I've **already/just** bought it.
2. We've **owned/been owning** this car **for/since** three years.
3. I used to see Anna every morning on the train, but I haven't **seen/been seeing** him recently.
4. Have you **lived/been living** in this house **for/just** a long time?
5. **Are you still working/Have you worked** on your project or have you **already/since** finished it?
6. **She's arrived/been arriving** for lectures late **yet/all week**.
7. I've **tried/been trying** to find my keys **for/since** an hour.
8. I haven't **used/been using** my computer **since/all** last Tuesday.

Practice: Present perfect 2

Rewrite the sentences in the present perfect continuous. Use the verbs and time expressions provided.

1. My sister repairs bicycles. She started when she was a kid (**repair, since**)

My sister _____

2. James is using the washing machine again. He's used it every day this week. (**use, all**)

James _____

3. How much longer until we get to New York? We left London five hours ago. (*fly, already, for*)

How much longer until we get to New York? We _____

4. Aren't they hungry? They started work at nine o'clock! (*work, since*)

Aren't they hungry? They _____

5. I live in an apartment. I moved here twelve months ago. (*live, all*)

I've _____

Past Perfect

Simple (HAD + PAST PARTICIPLE)

We use the past perfect to look back at a past action from a more recent past (with **NO** connection to the present). We can use it for:

- Single completed actions/states or repeated or longer actions that were completed before other past events.
 - Greece **had enjoyed** relative prosperity before the crash of 2008.
 - I passed the exam because I **had studied** beforehand.

- After verbs of thinking and feeling.
 - When I got to the bus, I realised that I **had left** my bus pass at home.

- With stative verbs (have, be, know etc.) actions/states that were unfinished or uncompleted before a specific time in the past.
 - When I arrived, I found out that the wifi **had been down** for a week.

NB - If events happened in a sequence, we can use the past simple instead, with words such as *after, as soon as*, or *when*. This is because the sentence involved looking back to an earlier time.

- After we (*had*) *had* our first lecture, we went to Temple Bar.

Continuous (HAD + BEEN + (VERB + ING))

- This is used to look back on a situation/action that was in progress before a given time, also in the past.
 - We **had been driving** for twelve hours before we took a break.

- We DO NOT usually use this with stative verbs (have, be, know etc)
 - I **had had** my car for years before the engine problems started (*Not: I had been having...*)

Practice: Past Perfect

Choose the correct form of the verb.

1. I had never **been using** / **used** Skype before you suggested it.
2. He had **been starting** / **started** saving for his daughter's education before she finished primary school.
3. They had not **been turning on** / **turned** on the air conditioner in five years, so they got rid of it.
4. You'd **been working** / You've **been working** there for ten years by the time you left, hadn't you?
5. Until I bumped into Alexi last week, I **didn't see** / **hadn't seen** her for since we left university.
6. It is going well, but we **have not finished** / **didn't finish** the project yet.

Future Perfect

Simple

This is used to look back from a point in the future to a completed action (also in the future). We use it:

- With specific time expressions such **by, in, at** or **before**
 - By the end of February 2019, we **will have finished** the course.
 - You **will have received** the marks before the end of January.
- To make predictions about the present.
 - "Why are so many people late?" "I bet they **won't have realised** that there are roadworks.
- With stative verbs (have, be, know etc.) the use is a little different. We use it to talk about unfinished or uncompleted action/state in the future that will still be uncompleted at the moment from which the speaker is looking back.
 - By Friday, we **will have been** without wifi for a week.

Note the similarity to present perfect

Continuous

This is for when we want to talk about future actions that are going to be in progress until or before a given time in the future. It is often used with time expressions such *by, in, at* or *before*.

- o At Christmas, I **will have been living** in Bolzano-Bozen for three months

Practice: Future Perfect

Complete the sentences using the future perfect simple or continuous. Use the words in brackets.

1. How long _____ (**we, travel**) by the time we arrived in Rome?
2. She _____ (**not complete**) her degree before she starts her job.
3. By the time I retire next month, I _____ (**not have**) a single day off in ten years.
4. I don't think we need to rush. They _____ (**not arrive**) yet.
5. By the end of this afternoon, _____ (**you, complete**) your first English lecture.
6. _____ (**you, study**) in English for three years by the time you graduate.
7. I need to speak to the Dean. Do you think _____ (**finish**) her meeting by now?
8. Hannes _____ (**not see**) the changes to the timetable, he bricked his phone.

Consolidation

Practice 1

Work in pairs. Explain the difference between the pairs of sentences.

- 1
a When my car broke down, I had decided to sell it.
b When my car broke down, I decided to sell it.

2

- a By this time next year, I will have moved to a smaller flat.
b This time next year, I will move to a smaller flat.

3

- a I've been thinking about getting rid of my TV.
b I'd been thinking about getting rid of my TV.

4

- a I've used my travel hairdryer a lot.
b I used my travel hairdryer a lot.

5

- a Had you been trying to think of ways to save money?
b Have you been trying to think of ways to save money?

Practice 2

Match the two parts of the sentence

1. I've been spending a lot of time	a. and now I want to work less and have fewer luxuries.
2. I'd been thinking for years about trying to simplify my life	b. after I get the new one next week.
3. I will have spent thousands of dollars making improvements to my home	c. reading about how to live more simply.
4. I've been working full time for ten years,	d. when I was given one to use for work.
5. I hadn't used a computer for several years	e. by the time I sell it next year.
6. I will have owned three cars in my life	f. when I finally decided to do something about it.

Practice 3

Choose the best options to complete each sentence.

1 My phone has become a necessity. I don't think I'll ever **be able/have been able** to get by without it.

2 Before last year, I **hadn't played/didn't play** the guitar since I was a teenager. Now I play every week, but I do think of it as a bit of a luxury.

3 Running has become a necessity for me. I **ran/'ve run** in eight marathons so far. I'd go crazy without it.

4 My luxury has always been reading. I **spend/'ve been spending** three hours a day reading.

5 Until recently, I **hadn't ever used/wasn't ever using** an alarm clock, because my dad always woke me up. But since I started university, an alarm clock has been an absolute necessity for me.

Practice 4

Complete the sentences. Use the correct (simple or continuous) present perfect, past perfect or future perfect form of the verbs. Use the continuous form wherever possible.

1. He _____ (never own) a clothes dryer because he doesn't mind hanging out the washing.
2. I _____ (drive) to work for years before I finally decided last year to start walking.
3. For the past year, you _____ (try) to convince me to buy a new laptop, but I don't want one!
4. By the time we retire, we _____ (save) thousands of pounds by living in a smaller flat.
5. If they (not install) air conditioning, they could have saved a lot of money.
6. I _____ (live) in a computer-free house for ten years next January, and I don't plan on changing that!
7. She _____ (use) her bike as her main form of transport for the past fifteen years.
8. I _____ (work) all day to try and finish this report, but I wish I'd done it sooner!

Practice 5

Been or gone?

Complete the sentences with **been** or **gone**.

1. I've _____ working in a café for the summer and am starting university in October.
2. Customers have _____ leaving more tips recently! We must be doing a good job, don't you think?
3. She's _____ on holiday for three weeks so we've taken on a replacement.
4. She's _____ asking about the overtime she's owed; can you check the time sheets please?
5. Have you ever _____ to a coffee-tasting event?
6. We arranged to meet at 5 p.m., but when I arrived at the café at ten past, he'd already _____ !

ⁱ Adapted from Keynote Advanced Student's Book, Unit 1.2