Present perfect simple 2 and present perfect continuous –
grammar exercise 2.

Use present perfect continuous where possible in the following sentences. If present perfect continuous isn’t possible, use present perfect simple. Write your answers below each sentence.

1) John (paint) the house all this weekend. He still hasn’t finished though.

2) Dave (do) voluntary work at the Old People’s Home over the past few weeks. He’s going to continue working there until Christmas.

3) I (not have) time to finish this book yet. There are so many interruptions.

4) (You see) Mary’s cat recently? We can’t find him anywhere.

5) Steve (study) the trumpet at the Conservatory since last year. He’s enjoying it very much.

6) The refugees (wait) for foreign aid since last spring. Nothing has arrived yet.

7) - What’s wrong with your eyes? They’re all red!
   - I (cry). Johnny hit me!

8) - What (you do)? You look very tired.
   - I’ve been driving all day. It’s been a long journey.

9) The police (look for) the murderer since she escaped from prison last Thursday.

10) Spain (be) a member of the European Union since 1st January 1986.
Teacher’s notes.
Present Perfect Simple 2 and Present Perfect Continuous.
Activity 2 - answers.

(Time for activity 2: 40 mins approx. Level: lower intermediate.)

1. has been painting*  
2. has been doing*  
3. haven’t had time  
4. Have you seen  
5. has been studying*  
6. have been waiting*  
7. have been crying*  
8. have you been doing*  
9. have been looking*  
10. has been

(Contracted forms also acceptable, of course.)
*Present perfect simple also possible but the continuous form is better in the context given.

I don’t recommend going into lengthy explanations why present perfect simple may be possible as well in some of the above situations. The exercise just asks the student to use the continuous if possible. Only 3, 4, and 10 do not allow the progressive form because of the verb.

Oral activity:
Make a few duplicate sets of cards with a phrase on each one like the following: study English; watch the Olympic Games on TV; go for walks in the country; go out with friends a lot; go to the cinema a lot; relax; practice Tai Chi, etc.

Write “What have you been doing recently?” on the board.

Explain to the class that the above question is a good conversation starter with people we know but haven’t seen for a while. Ask a student the same question and then continue the theme with him/her:

- I’ve been doing some Christmas shopping.
- Really! So you like to do your Christmas shopping early?
- Yes, I can buy presents cheaper that way.
- Who do you buy presents for? etc.

Arrange the class into small groups or pairs and give each group a pack of the cards, which they place face down on the table. A student picks up a card and places it on the table face up. The other students start with the lead question and the student who has picked up the card must invent and pretend he/she has been doing that activity. The other students must maintain the conversation by questioning for a short while and then another card is picked up.

You may want to add some very unlikely actions to the card pack: train as an astronaut; visit the Antarctic; recording a song for a new album, etc.

Enjoy the class!