

Verb tense, voice and mood

Present perfect tense



Pollution *is* a problem in this area for the last three years.



Pollution *has been* a problem in this area for the last three years.

Explanation

The present perfect tense (*has been, have worked, has talked, have used* etc.) is used for an action that started in the past and is still continuing (or just finishing).

She has worked for us for two years implies that she is still with us, (or just about to leave). Compare this with: *She worked for us for two years*. Here the use of the simple past tense suggests that she is no longer working for us.

Note: The word *since* (indicating from a particular point in time) requires a present perfect tense. For example: *He has been studying hard since Tuesday*.

More Examples

- The architect *works / has worked / worked* on the plans every day for the last fortnight. (Since the action started in the past and continues, or has just finished, use the present perfect: *has worked*.)
- Until this moment, I *have / have had / had* a tendency to underrate your abilities. (Use the present perfect: *have had* because the tendency continues right up to the present moment.)
- Since he *has suffered / suffered / had suffered* indignities in the past, he was placed under special supervision when he arrived. (The word *since* in this context means *because* and does not necessarily need a present perfect. In fact the past perfect *had suffered* is best because he suffered before he arrived. [See rule C01])