

## DIALOGUE USING THE PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS

Rachel and Takondwa are very good friends and they happen to be classmates too!

Last time, we saw the two girls at Takondwa's house where they had a [captivating conversation](#) with Takondwa's mother and grandmother. Since then, the two teenagers have been talking about the different subjects that were brought up on that day. Unable to contain their curiosity, they have decided to go to Takondwa's home village so that they can ask a few questions to the Chief! Aren't they brave? Do you want to know what they talked about? Below is a transcript of their delightful conversation.

**Chief:** Good afternoon Takondwa. welcome to your ancestors' village. How are you my daughter? And how is your young friend here? I have just been talking to your mothers on the phone.

## THE PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS TENSE

AFFIRMATIVE FORM (+)	
FULL FORM	SHORT FORM
<u>I, You, We, You, They</u> <b>have been sleeping</b>	<u>I, You, We, You, They</u> <b>'ve been sleeping</b>
<u>He, She, It</u> <b>has been sleeping</b>	<u>He, She, It</u> <b>'s been sleeping</b>

NEGATIVE FORM (-)	
FULL FORM	SHORT FORM
<u>I, You, We, You, They</u> <b>have not been sleeping</b>	<u>I, You, We, You, They</u> <b>haven't been sleeping</b>
<u>He, She, It</u> <b>has not been sleeping</b>	<u>He, She, It</u> <b>hasn't been sleeping</b>

### INTERROGATIVE FORM (?)

#### YES/NO QUESTIONS

	I	
	you	
	he	
	she	
<b>Have</b>	it	<b>been sleeping?</b>
	we	
	you	
	they	

#### WH-QUESTIONS

What **have** I been doing?  
 How long **have** you been sitting?  
 Where **have** he been hiding?  
 Who **has** been talking?  
 How **have** we been doing?  
 Why **have** they been working with their friends?

#### EXAMPLES OF OTHER VERBS

Arrive <i>Arriving</i>	Slice <i>Slicing</i>	Make <i>Making</i>	Sit <i>Sitting</i>
Start <i>Starting</i>	Look <i>Looking</i>	Have <i>Having</i>	Stand <i>Standing</i>
Play <i>Playing</i>	Stay <i>Staying</i>	Bake <i>Baking</i>	Buy <i>Buying</i>
Ban <i>Banning</i>	Plan <i>Planning</i>	Do <i>Doing</i>	Teach <i>Teaching</i>
Stop <i>Stopping</i>	Skip <i>Skipping</i>	Get <i>Getting</i>	Speak <i>Speaking</i>
Marry <i>Marrying</i>	Try <i>Trying</i>	Run <i>Running</i>	Write <i>Writing</i>



**Takondwa:** (*Kneeling and avoiding looking directly at the Chief*): Good afternoon Chief.

Thank you for your warm welcome. I am fine and my friend, Rachel, is all right too.

**Rachel:** (*Adopting the same body posture as her friend*): Thank you Chief for allowing us into your home with such benevolence. We are honoured to be here. I have been dreaming of this day for such a long time.

**Chief:** It is my duty as a Chief to receive his or her subjects with kindness. What brings you here my daughters?

**Takondwa:** We have been thinking of the different customs and beliefs that exist in our culture. We would like you to shed more light on them.

## THE PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS TENSE

AFFIRMATIVE FORM ( FULL AND SHORT FORMS)							
I	You	He	She	It	We	You	They
have been trying		has been trying			have been trying		
've been trying		's been trying			've been trying		

NEGATIVE FORM ( FULL AND SHORT FORMS)							
I	You	He	She	It	We	You	They
have not been trying		has not been trying			have not been trying		
haven't been trying		hasn't been trying			haven't been trying		

INTERROGATIVE FORM							
Have		Has			Have		
I	you	he	she	it	we	you	they
been trying?							

**Chief:** (*Laughing heartily*): What a pleasure it is to hear that! Nowadays, a lot of young people are no longer interested in knowing their traditions and heritage. City life has blinded them. They do not know that ignorance can be a crime, especially when it comes to not knowing the rites and rituals that have held our tribes together for generations.

**Rachel:** That is true Chief. Living in the city has a lot of advantages but it has also robbed us of basic knowledge regarding our origins. Where do we come from? Who are our ancestors? What did they believe in? We have been living in utter ignorance for years. Fortunately, elders like you are there to remind us of our history and customs.

**Takondwa:** Chief, can you tell us more about marriage? How do young women get married here?

**Chief:** *(Laughing even louder this time and talking to his wife):* NyaChisi, hear these town girls. They are asking about marriage! Come here my dear wife and hear this for yourself.

**NyaChisi** *(Running and wiping her hands on her chitenje. She was in the kitchen, preparing food. She greets the girls quickly):* What have you been talking about? Marriage? Have you been planning to get married girls? Who has been planning with you? You are too young; you should finish school first! You will starve if you get married this young. You have been telling yourself lies if you think marriage at your age is total bliss. *(She laughs with her husband for a few seconds.)*

**Rachel:** No, mother *(Laughing as well)*. We do not want to get married. We want to remain in school. I want to become a successful international top model and Takondwa would like to be an engineer when she finishes school. We have been talking about this for years. Our dreams are strong.

**NyaChisi:** I was worried. You look clever. Marriage at a young age should not be encouraged. You are not in a hurry. Have you been talking about marriage with your mothers? Is this why you came here? Who are the young men that are interested in you?

**Takondwa:** No one is interested in us, mother. Do not worry, hi, hi. Yes, we have been talking about this subject but for different reasons. It was a fascinating topic by the way. Grandmother actually told us that she first met her husband on the very day of her wedding. We were somehow shocked. I can't imagine not knowing my future husband beforehand.

## THE PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS TENSE

AFFIRMATIVE FORM	NEGATIVE FORM	INTERROGATIVE FORM	EXAMPLES
<p><b>FULL FORM</b> I, You, He, She, It, We, You, They <b>have been planning</b></p> <p><b>SHORT FORM</b> I, You, We, You, They <b>'ve been planning</b></p> <p style="background-color: #fff9c4; padding: 5px;"><b>He, She, It</b> has been planning 's been planning</p>	<p><b>FULL FORM</b> I, You, We, You, They <b>have not been planning</b></p> <p><b>SHORT FORM</b> I, You, We, You, They <b>haven't been planning</b></p> <p style="background-color: #fff9c4; padding: 5px;"><b>He, She, It</b> has not been planning hasn't been planning</p>	<p><b>YES/NO QUESTIONS</b> <b>Have</b> I, you, we, you, they <b>been planning?</b></p> <p><b>WH-QUESTIONS</b> <b>What have</b> I, you, we, you, they <b>been planning?</b></p> <p style="background-color: #fff9c4; padding: 5px;"><b>Has he/she/it been planning?</b> <b>What has he/she/it been planning</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I have been planning to see you.</i></li> <li><i>She hasn't been sleeping for days.</i></li> <li><i>He's been looking for a house..</i></li> <li><i>What have they been singing?</i></li> <li><i>She's been talking to me since you left yesterday.</i></li> <li><i>I haven't been eating or drinking.</i></li> <li><i>Has she been doing her homework?</i></li> </ul>

**Chief:** That was common in the past, as a matter of fact. Nowadays, young people fall in love and ask their uncles to deal with the formal discussions such as *lobolas* and dowries behind their backs. Of course, there are cases when two families will agree to have their son and daughter united without the concerned parties knowing about the negotiations. Here, what we really want is that marriages last until death takes one of the partners away. Children should not be the ones to suffer when their parents separate for petty reasons.

**Rachel:** That is true, thank you for enlightening us Chief. There is a lot to learn. Times are changing and I guess that this village is also transforming as well. How does *lobola* work exactly?

**Chief:** That is a good question young girl. Let me define *lobola* first. In our *Tumbuka* culture, *lobola* is money or livestock that is given to a bride's family in exchange of their daughter's hand. We prefer cows here. They are a good investment. Five cows and a little money cannot hurt the future husband's finances. He needs to prove that he is serious about his intentions.

## THE PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS TENSE

AFFIRMATIVE FORM	NEGATIVE FORM	INTERROGATIVE FORM	EXAMPLES
<p><b>FULL FORM</b> I, You, He, She, It, We, You, They <b>have been</b> <b>planning</b></p> <p><b>SHORT FORM</b> I, You, We, You, They <b>'ve been</b> <b>planning</b></p> <p>▲ <b>He, She, It</b> <b>has been planning</b> <b>'s been planning</b></p>	<p><b>FULL FORM</b> I, You, We, You, They <b>have not been</b> <b>planning</b></p> <p><b>SHORT FORM</b> I, You, We, You, They <b>haven't been</b> <b>planning</b></p> <p>▲ <b>He, She, It</b> <b>has not been planning</b> <b>hasn't been planning</b></p>	<p><b>YES/NO QUESTIONS</b> <b>Have</b> <b>I, you, we, you, they</b> <b>been planning?</b></p> <p><b>WH-QUESTIONS</b> <b>What have</b> <b>I, you, we, you, they</b> <b>been planning?</b></p> <p>▲ <b>Has he/she/it been</b> <b>planning?</b> <b>What has he/she/it been</b> <b>planning</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I have been planning to see you.</i></li> <li>• <i>She hasn't been sleeping for days.</i></li> <li>• <i>He's been looking for a house..</i></li> <li>• <i>What have they been singing?</i></li> <li>• <i>She's been talking to me since you left yesterday.</i></li> <li>• <i>I haven't been eating or drinking.</i></li> <li>• <i>Has she been doing her homework?</i></li> </ul>

**Takondwa:** What if the groom or his family do not have any wealth? Is there no marriage in that case?

**Chief:** Some couples elope but such marriages are doomed to failure. They do not have the blessings of both families. If the wife is in trouble, she cannot be protected by her own family and vice versa.

**Rachel:** But why should money or property be involved when two people are in love and they just want be together?

**Chief:** This is how we do things here. The father should be rewarded for all the efforts he expended in raising his daughter. It is not easy to do so. The husband should realise that he is not just getting an object that he can mistreat or abuse. Saving some money and paying the bride price shows that he is serious about the whole process. Look at NyaChisi, she is still here. I paid a good bride price for her and I have been treating her well. Are you unhappy with your marriage my wife? (*laughing and looking at NyaChisi*). Say something my dear wife.

## THE PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS TENSE

AFFIRMATIVE FORM (+)		NEGATIVE FORM (-)		EXAMPLES (Eg.)
FULL FORM	SHORT FORM	FULL FORM	SHORT FORM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have been planning to see you.</li> <li>She hasn't been sleeping for days.</li> <li>He's been looking for a house.</li> <li>What have they been singing?</li> <li>She's been talking to me since you left yesterday.</li> <li>I haven't been eating or drinking.</li> <li>Has she been doing her homework?</li> </ul>
I have been eating	I 've been eating	I have not been eating	I haven't been eating	
You have been eating	You 've been eating	You have not been eating	You haven't been eating	
He } has been eating	He } 's been eating	He } has not been eating	He } hasn't been eating	
She } has been eating	She } 's been eating	She } has not been eating	She } hasn't been eating	
It } has been eating	It } 's been eating	It } has not been eating	It } hasn't been eating	
We } have been eating	We } 've been eating	We } have not been eating	We } haven't been eating	
You } have been eating	You } 've been eating	You } have not been eating	You } haven't been eating	
They } have been eating	They } 've been eating	They } have not been eating	They } haven't been eating	
<b>INTERROGATIVE FORM</b>		Have <span style="background-color: #e0f7fa;">I</span> been eating ...?	Have <span style="background-color: #e0f7fa;">we</span> been eating...?	
		Have <span style="background-color: #e0f7fa;">you</span> been eating ...?	Have <span style="background-color: #e0f7fa;">you</span> been eating...?	
		Has <span style="background-color: #e0f7fa;">he/she/it</span> been eating?	Have <span style="background-color: #e0f7fa;">they</span> been eating...?	

**NyaChisi:** (*Laughing too and turning her head towards the girls*): Marrying a Chief is not easy but I am still here. He takes care of so many things, you know. He has so many duties, yet he still remembers me. Mostly he deals with conflicts and allocates land to people. That is not easy but I am here to support him. In return, I get a lot of respect and consideration from the villagers here. I don't even draw water from the well or cultivate our field, you know. There are people here who do that for free. On top of that, our beloved Chief here feeds my

family very well. (*Laughing*) He has been taking good care of me, hasn't he? Haven't you Chief?

**Chief:** (*Stifling a smile*) I try my best. I see that you are happy so I must be doing my job very well.

**Rachel:** You look very healthy mother. Our Chief must be taking good care of you.

**NyaChisi:** (*Rising from her reed mat*) Well, my children, let me go to the kitchen and continue preparing some food for you. You won't starve in my house, will you?

**Chief:** My wife is an excellent cook. I have never been disappointed with her cooking. We have been living together for so many years and I have never complained about her food. Not on a single day. You will see for yourself my children.

**NyaChisi:** Ha, ha, ha. He exaggerates so much!

**Chief:** Just wait and see...

**Takondwa:** I'm so hungry.

**Rachel:** So am I. Mother, we can't wait to taste your food.

**NyaChisi:** All right, I will be here shortly. Take good care of yourselves.

**Takondwa and Rachel:** Thank you mother.



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