For, since, and ago

A

for and since

We use for and since to say how long.

- Rachel is in Brazil. She has been there for three days.
  since Monday.

We use for + a period of time (three days / two years, etc.).

- Richard has been in Canada for six months. (not since six months)
- We've been waiting for two hours. (not since two hours)
- I've lived in Chicago for a long time.

We use since + the start of the period (Monday / 9 o’clock, etc.).

- Richard has been in Canada since January. (= from January to now)
- We've been waiting since 9 o’clock. (= from 9 o’clock to now)
- I've lived in Chicago since I was ten years old.

ago

ago = before now

- Ji Yoo started her new job three weeks ago. (= three weeks before now)
- “When did Tom go out?” “Ten minutes ago.” (= ten minutes before now)
- I had dinner an hour ago.
- Life was very different a hundred years ago.

We use ago with the past (started/did/had/was, etc.).

Compare ago and for:

- When did Rachel arrive in Brazil?
  She arrived in Brazil three days ago.
- How long has she been in Brazil?
  She has been in Brazil for three days.
Exercises

18.1 Write for or since.
1. Rachel has been in Brazil since Monday.
2. Rachel has been in Brazil for three days.
3. My aunt has lived in Australia for 15 years.
4. Jennifer is in her office. She has been there since 7 o'clock.
5. Mexico has been an independent country since 1821.
6. The bus is late. We've been waiting for 20 minutes.
7. Nobody lives in those houses. They have been empty for many years.
8. Luis has been sick for a long time. He has been in the hospital since October.

18.2 Answer these questions. Use ago.
1. When was your last meal? Three hours ago.
2. When was the last time you were sick? 
3. When was the last time you went to the movies? 
4. When was the last time you were in a car? 
5. When was the last time you took a vacation? 

18.3 Complete the sentences. Use the words in parentheses ( ) + for or ago.
1. Rachel arrived in Brazil three days ago. (three days)
2. Rachel has been in Brazil for three days. (three days)
3. Linda and Frank have been married for 20 years. (20 years)
4. Linda and Frank got married three years ago. (20 years)
5. We arrived ten minutes ago. (ten minutes)
6. It started to rain an hour ago. (an hour)
7. Silvia has been studying English for six months. (six months)
8. I bought these shoes a few days ago. (a few days)

18.4 Complete the sentences with for or since.
1. Pam is in Cuba now. She arrived three days ago. She has been there for three days.
2. Carlos is here. He arrived here on Tuesday. He has been here since Tuesday.
3. It’s raining. It started an hour ago. It’s been raining for an hour.
4. I know Sue. I met her two years ago. I’ve known her for two years.
5. I have a camera. I bought it in 1999. I’ve had it since 1999.
6. Liz is studying medicine at the university. She started three years ago. She has been studying since then.
7. Toshi plays the piano. He started when he was seven years old. Toshi has been playing the piano since he was seven.

18.5 Write sentences about yourself with for and since. Begin with the words in parentheses ( ).
1. (I’ve lived) 
2. (I’ve been) 
3. (I’ve been studying) 
4. (I’ve known) 
5. (I’ve had) 

Additional Exercise 17 (page 250)