

SECTION  
**10**

**GRAMMAR USAGE,  
NARRATIVES,  
DRAMA, POETRY,  
TEXT TYPES AND  
PURPOSES**



# GRAMMAR USAGE, WRITING AND LITERATURE

## INTRODUCTION

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Under tense and aspect in the previous section, we learned that the simple present tense is used to express habits, universal truths and fixed situations while the present continuous is used to express an action that is still on-going.

In our daily life, we engage in conversations with colleagues and others wherever we find ourselves. Some of these conversations are argumentative in form. With this, because we see our side of the argument as right, we try to persuade or convince our audience (listeners) to accept our opinion/position and reject what our opponent is saying. With this perspective in mind, we are going to focus our discussion on persuasive writing. This form of writing has the main aim of inducing or influencing our audience to support our side of the argument.

In this section, you will also learn about the present perfect and the present perfect continuous tense. The section will also build on what has been learned on Monologues and Dialogues on the sequence of events.

### By the end of the lesson, you should be able to

- use forms of verbs in everyday activities.
- develop the sequence of events across texts and how it contributes to meanings
- write a persuasive piece that states and defends a position

### Key Ideas

**The present Perfect:** It is used to describe events completed in the past, though its effect is still felt in the present.

**Present Perfect Progressive/Continuous:** It is used to show an action that started in the past and is continuing into the present.

**Plot:** The plot of a work of prose refers to the way and manner in which the events or incidents narrated in the work are arranged.

**Persuasive writing** is any written work that tries to convince the reader to accept the writer's opinion or position

# TENSE AND ASPECT

## Present Perfect

The present perfect tense combines the present tense with the perfect aspect to indicate an action that started further back in the past and continues up to the present time or has connection to the present.

It is formed using the auxiliary verb 'has' for singular subjects and 'have' for plural subjects, plus the past participle of the main verb. For example: The cat has eaten the fish. They have spoken the truth.

**Be careful:** Do not confuse the present perfect with the past perfect. The past perfect uses 'had'.

The present perfect tense is used:

1. To describe an action that started in the past and continues till the present:
  - a. I have written twenty letters this week.
  - b. They have dug two wells.
2. To describe an action that happened at an unspecified time in the past and have a connection to the present:
  - a. They have just arrived, so they are tired.
  - b. I have never travelled to Ziope.
3. To refer to periods of time up to the present. In this usage, it is used with *since* and *for*:
  - a. The old man has lived here since he was a boy.
  - b. I have been here for eight years.
4. With just, recently, already, yet, still, at last, finally, to describe actions recently completed:
  - a. The choir has recently sung an anthem.
  - b. They have just finished the project work.
5. In topical contexts, e.g. broadcasts and newspaper reports.
  - a. Some villages have been destroyed by storms.
  - b. Two armed robbers have been arrested.

## Present Perfect Continuous

The present perfect continuous is used to show an action that started in the past and is still on-going. For example:

- i. She has been waiting for you all day. (meaning; still waiting)
- ii. I've been working on this report since eight o'clock in the morning. (meaning; still working on the report)
- iii. They have been travelling since last October. (meaning; still travelling)

It can also be used to refer to actions that have finished, but the speaker is interested in the results:

- i. She has been cooking since last night. (evidence; and the food on the table appears steaming)
- ii. It's been raining. (evidence; you can tell because the streets are still wet)
- iii. Someone's been eating my chips. (half of them are gone)

## Formation of the Present Perfect Continuous

The present perfect continuous is made up of two elements: the present perfect of the verb 'to be' (have/has been) and the present participle of the main verb (base + ing). Hence, a present perfect continuous sentence will have the structure:

Subject + has/have been + base + ing

For example: She has been swimming.

Note: The auxiliary has/have can be contracted with the subject. For example:

- a. She's been swimming.
- b. They've been worried about the unpredictable weather.

**Example:** Present perfect continuous, TO SLEEP

Affirmative	Negative	Interrogative
I have been sleeping	I have not been sleeping	Have I been sleeping?
You have been sleeping.	You haven't been sleeping.	Have you been sleeping?
He/She/It has been sleeping.	He/She/It hasn't been sleeping?	Has he/she/it been sleeping?
We have been sleeping	We haven't been sleeping.	Haven't we been sleeping?
You have been sleeping.	You haven't been sleeping.	Haven't you been sleeping?
They have been sleeping.	They haven't been sleeping.	Haven't they been sleeping?

## Exceptions

Some stative verbs whose continuous or -ing forms change the meaning of the base form:

Some verbs are not typically used in the continuous form to mean the same as their base forms. They include know, hate, hear, understand, and want. They are normally used in the simple present perfect instead. Bracketed versions below are acceptable for emphasis in context. For example:

1. I've wanted to visit China for years. (I've been wanting to visit China for years.)
2. She's known Robert since she was a child.
3. I've hated that music since I first heard it.
4. I've heard a lot about you recently. (I've been hearing a lot about you recently.)
5. We've understood everything.

### Activity 10.1

1. Act out this scenario with a friend.

You are at a shopping mall, shopping with your friend all day. You then take a break to grab some Jollof rice and fried fish, and Banku and Okra stew at the eatery. As you sit and eat, you start chatting about your experiences. You will use expressions such as:

Your friend: "You've been looking for a new pair of shoes all day and finally, you have found the perfect pair! "How long have you been searching for shoes?"

Your reply: "I've been searching for hours, but it was worth it!"

2. Write down the sentences used in the dialogue above under the appropriate heading in the table provided below:

Present Perfect Tense	Present Perfect Continuous

3. How is the present perfect tense different from the present perfect continuous tense?
4. Discuss with two of your friends and down your observation(s).
5. Join another friend. Take a cue from points 1 and 2. Write down two sentences each for the present perfect and present perfect continuous tenses. These sentences should be inspired by the 'eatery scene' above.
6. Use the sentences you have compiled and analysed to explain the use of the present perfect tense and present perfect continuous tense.



7. Use the sentences below to show how the present perfect tense is formed.
  - a. The head teacher has retired.
  - b. They have broken the pot.
  
8. Use the sentences below to show how the present perfect tense is formed.
  - a. The child has been crying all day.
  - b. Farmers have been commended for their hard work.

## EXTENDED READING

- Organised English Grammar (Second Edition), Prof. F. Wiredu pg.43
- New Gateway to English for Senior High Schools Book One, A.B.K. Dadzie and N. Grant, pg. 84 – 85

## PERSUASIVE WRITING

Persuasive writing is any written work that tries to convince the reader of the writer's opinion. A persuasive essay can also draw on personal experience, logical arguments, and an appeal to emotion in a compelling presentation to influence readers. It includes debates and argumentative essays. Because this form of writing aims at convincing the audience, one has to choose carefully the language to use. This should take a precise, powerful and accurate form of words. You could also ask questions to engage readers and smooth the transition to other ideas. This also requires that you speak directly to your audience. To do this effectively, you need to use appropriate cohesive devices (and, before, despite, until, since), and appropriate cohesive expressions (again, furthermore, moreover) to link ideas. In writing a persuasive essay like a debate, it is important to organise the ideas systematically to develop the structure of the text. This includes the introduction (containing the vocatives, the motion, and declaration of stance and definition of keywords, if any).

The body (in several paragraphs, explaining in detail what you want to communicate - rebutting your opponent's opinion and bringing forth your own opinion on the subject), and the conclusion (reiterating your stance and calling on your audience to support the side of your argument). To win the support of the audience, you have to select ideas in such a way that they would outweigh those of your opponent's when presented. Communication plays a pivotal role in persuasive or argumentative writing. It is therefore important that, when we are presenting our opinion or position, we pay attention to our communication skills. Effective communication helps the audience to understand the message being put across so that they are helped to side with us. Based on this, they will be able to make informed decisions as to whether or not to support our argument. We should also be alert enough to counter any ideas that may come from our opponents which we might not have imagined earlier. Preparation of a likely counter argument and its rebuttal are thus vital before the presentation.

## Activity 10.2

### Read the passage below and carry out the activities that follow.

The subject of homework calls for debate among teachers, students, and parents. However, it is obvious that homework is not necessary every day. Homework should not be assigned to students on a daily basis because of health issues, the level of difficulty, and the problem of time.

To begin with, daily homework is unnecessary because of health issues. Students who have too much homework can develop poor sleep habits; many students pull “all-nighters” in an attempt to keep up. Another health issue is the lack of fresh air. Studies show that simple exposure to sunlight can provide bodies with necessary vitamins, but there is no sunlight at your desk in your bedroom. Also, stress levels go through the roof when faced with too much work. In countries like Ghana, overworked students have a tendency to commit suicide when things do not go in their favour after their hard work. Evidently, too much homework can seriously damage your health.

In addition, daily homework presents an unrealistic level of difficulty. If all teachers support daily homework, a student will have a heavy workload. Some homework is simply too difficult to be completed alone; a parent is not a teacher and should not be expected to know all the answers. Also, struggling students who face failure at school and at home might choose to give up on school completely. A student who did not understand all day will feel even more discouraged when left alone to complete the homework. Obviously, daily homework is simply too discriminatory.

Finally, daily homework causes major problems when it comes to time. Many students need to work to supplement their family income or for post-secondary education; there is no time for a student to manage a part-time job and homework. Valuable time for family and friends also suffers when daily homework is assigned. Students need connections with the people who care about them in order to be emotionally and mentally healthy. With no time to simply chill out with those we love, we cannot form healthy relationships. Last but not least, students who have homework every day cannot join extra-curricular activities such as sports and clubs. The educational system constantly stresses that a successful student is an active part of the school community, but a student with no free time has no time to join and make new friends. Thus, daily homework seriously compromises a student’s free time.

Owing to problems such as lack of good health, increased level of difficulty and lack of time, daily homework should not be assigned to students. It is, quite simply, unrealistic. Teachers should keep in mind that they are developing future people, and people require a healthy mind, body and spirit.

1. Examine the sample passage above and state its meaning.
2. With critical examination of the passage, discuss with one of your colleagues and write down the meaning of persuasive writing.

3. Using appropriate strategies and features of a debate, write a short essay on a given debate topic relating to your environment and present it orally to the class.
4. You have been admitted into a senior high school to offer a general science course, but your father wants you to read agricultural science. Write a letter to your father, persuading him to allow you to read general science.

## PLOT

The plot of a work of prose refers to the way and manner in which the events or incidents narrated in the work are arranged. There are two key types of plot structure used in the presentation of a story. The first type of plot structure is called the linear or chronological or organic as opposed to the episodic or inorganic plot. Thus, the plot of a story is the 'what' of the story. It is the storyline; the rendering of events from beginning to the end. A structure can facilitate the ordering of the storyline to achieve some special emotional or historical effect for example. The plot consists essentially of actions and responses to actions. It involves the development of conflict, characters, and setting in the narrative and typically includes:

- **Exposition:** Introduction to the setting, characters, and situation.
- **Inciting incidents:** An event that sets the story in motion.
- **Rising Action:** A series of events that builds tension and conflict.
- **Climax:** The most intense or critical moment in the story.
- **Falling Action:** Events that follow the climax and lead to the resolution.
- **Resolution:** The conclusion of the story, where conflicts are resolved.
- **Denouement:** The final outcome or result of the story.

## FEATURES OF A PLOT

A good plot should:

- Be engaging and meaningful
- Have a clear structure and progression
- Include twists and turns to keep the audience interested
- Develop the characters and their relationships
- Explore themes and ideas
- Provide a satisfying resolution

*The great English writer Charles Dickens summarised the strategy as, 'Make them laugh, make them cry, make them wait.'*



### Activity 10.3

1. Watch this short video in the link that follows and trace the sequence of events using a mind map.

<https://vimeo.com/326567794>

2. Read the story below.

In the small village of Koforidua, Ghana, there lived a young boy named Kofi. He was known for his exceptional football skills and dreamed of becoming a professional player. Kofi's hard work and dedication earned him a spot on the village team, and he quickly became a star player.

One day, a wealthy football scout offered Kofi a chance to play for a top team in Accra, but only if he agreed to cheat and win at all costs. Kofi was torn between his ambition and his values. He knew that cheating would go against everything he had learned from his parents and coaches.

Kofi decided to reject the scout's offer and continue playing with integrity. He led his village team to victory in the regional tournament, earning recognition and respect from the community. The scout returned, impressed by Kofi's skills and sportsmanship, and offered him a new contract with a top team in Accra.

Kofi's decision to play with integrity had led him to achieve his dreams without compromising his values. He learned that honesty, hard work, and fair play are essential for true success. Kofi's story inspired his teammates and the entire village, teaching them that moral character is more important than winning at all costs.

3. From the story you read above, identify the beginning, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution of the story's plot.
4. Study the guidelines on how to Plot a Story and, with the aid of a story map, write a short story on your own bringing out the beginning, middle and the ending.
  - Think critically.
  - Write out the central conflict.
  - Create a brief outline.
  - Pick a point of view.
  - Select the right story structure.

## REFERENCES

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# Review Questions

Underline the verbs in these sentences and indicate the tense as either present perfect or present perfect continuous.

1. Kofi has been to the hospital.
2. Amerley and her friends haven't heard from home.
3. Ekua Mansa has maintained a beautiful kinky hair.
4. My mother has been holding my younger sibling's hand the entire time.
5. Lucy has been hesitating to ask for help.
6. Construct two sentences for the present perfect and the present perfect continuous tense. Use the verb, **to begin** for present perfect and **to praise** for the present perfect continuous tense.
  - Affirmative
  - Negative
  - Interrogative
7. How is persuasive writing different from other forms of writing?
8. Identify the main features of a debate.
9. What are the elements/components of an introductory paragraph to debate writing?
10. Compose an introductory paragraph containing the central idea and supporting sentences.
11. Watch a short video of your choice and outline the plot development of the video.
12.
  - a. In your own words, what is meant by a Plot?
  - b. Name the two types of Plot we have.

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