



La Mansión
del Inglés

CURSO DE INGLÉS

AVANZADO

Lección 1



Breaking the Ice:

Advanced Reconnection Strategies (C1 Level)

FACILITATED BY

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NATURAL EXPRESSIONS & ESSENTIAL VOCABULARY

"What have you been up to?"

Uses **Present Perfect Continuous** to emphasize ongoing activities since you last met.

"To Run Into" vs. "To Drift Apart"

Run Into: Unexpected Meetings
Drift Apart: Losing Touch Gradually

The "Acquaintance" Distinction

Friends (Spanish): Close relationship
Acquaintance (English): Significant Social Distance



SPANISH vs. ENGLISH: CULTURAL & LINGUISTIC NUANCES

	Spanish Perspective		English (C1) Requirement
Social Honesty	Detailed/honest responses ("How are you?")	✓	Brief, positive formulas ("Can't complain")
Intentions	"Tonia intención de..." (Past)	➔	"I've been meaning to..." (Present Perfect Continuous)
Directness	Direct questions are standard.	👤	High value on indirectness and "understatement"

Quick reference for Spanish speakers to avoid common pitfalls.



SPANISH SPEAKER'S TOOLKIT (PRONUNCIATION & GRAMMAR)

Tense Perspective: Present Perfect
Use Present Perfect for current connections; avoid Past Simple.

Intonation for Friendliness
Use rising intonation in greetings to convey warmth; flat tones can seem disinterested.

Tone & Understatement
British English uses "quite good" to mean "satisfactory," which may sound less enthusiastic to Spanish ears.

ADVANCED NUANCE & CULTURAL CONTRAST

"Quite" vs. "Rather"
British English

Quite: Fairly
Rather: Stronger/Unexpected

The Indirect Question Shift

Direct: Can you help me?
Indirect: "I was wondering if... you could help me." (Softens requests, uses statement word order)

The Privacy Buffer

Response: "Good, thanks."
(Maintain social harmony, avoid personal oversharing)

C1 ADVANCED ENGLISH LESSON

Breaking the Ice Like a Native

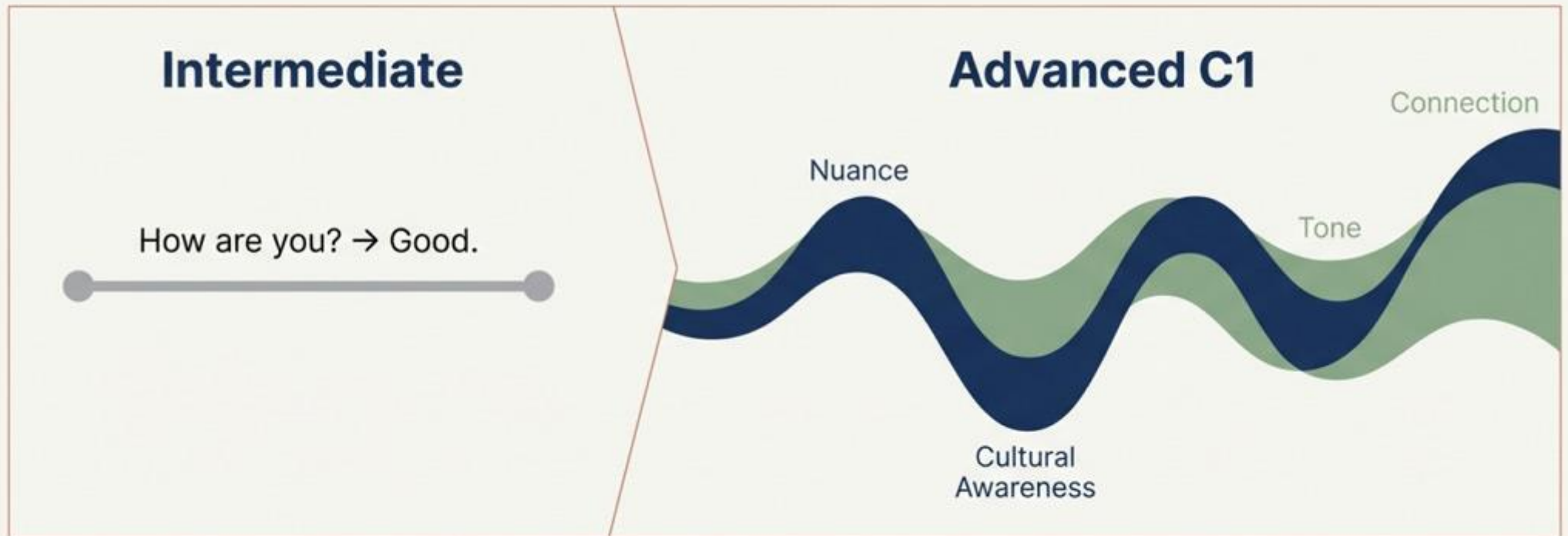
Beyond 'How are you?': Advanced Strategies for Reconnecting

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The 'How are you?' Trap

At the intermediate level, interactions are transactional.
At the C1 level, they must be relational.



Moving from formulas to genuine connection requires cultural awareness.

The Scenario: Sarah & Tom

Read the dialogue below. Two former colleagues meet at a party.

Sarah: Hey, long time no see!

Tom: Sarah! Wow, it's been ages. How have you been keeping?

Sarah: I've been good, thanks. Busy, though. What have you been up to?

Tom: Oh, you know, work, travelling a bit. I actually moved to Manchester last year.

Sarah: No way! I've been meaning to call you, but life just got in the way.

Tom: Tell me about it. We all get caught up in things.

Sarah: We should catch up properly sometime. Maybe grab a coffee?

Tom: Definitely. How's life treating you these days?

Sarah: Quite well, actually. It's been rather hectic, but I can't complain.

Tom: That's good to hear. I'm glad we ran into each other tonight.



The Art of the Ellipsis

Long time no see!



No Verb = Informal & Spontaneous

Warning

Spanish Contrast: "¡Cuánto tiempo sin verte!"
(Grammatically complete)

[It has been a]
Long time
[since we have]
see[n each
other].

Measuring Well-being: UK vs. US



How have you been keeping?

KEEPING suggests ongoing state + warmth.



How have you been?

Standardized form.

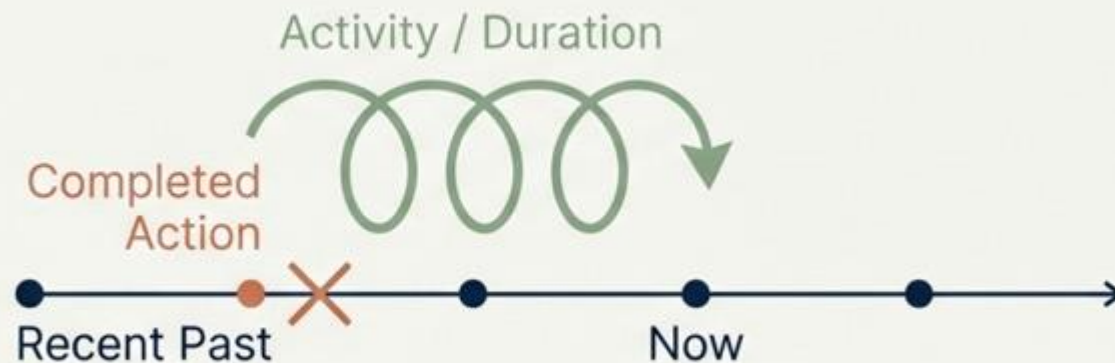
Spanish Parallel: ¿Cómo has estado?

Cultural Note: Even with the warmer tone, a brief, positive answer is expected. Do not overshare.

Emphasizing Recent Activity

Present Perfect Continuous

"What have you been up to?"



The Spanish Trap: Avoid defaulting to simple Present Perfect ("¿Qué has hecho?"). Use **Continuous** to focus on the **activity** itself.

The Unfulfilled Intention

“I’ve been meaning to call you...”

Have been + -ing + infinitive

Softens the guilt of losing touch by emphasizing background intention.

Spanish Parallel:

Spanish: “He querido llamarte” / “Tenía intención de...”

Drifting Apart



To Drift Apart (Physical distance = Emotional distance)

The Polite Fiction

We should catch up properly sometime.

Literal Meaning

“Let’s schedule a meeting in depth.”



Social Function

I want to maintain harmony and end this interaction politely.

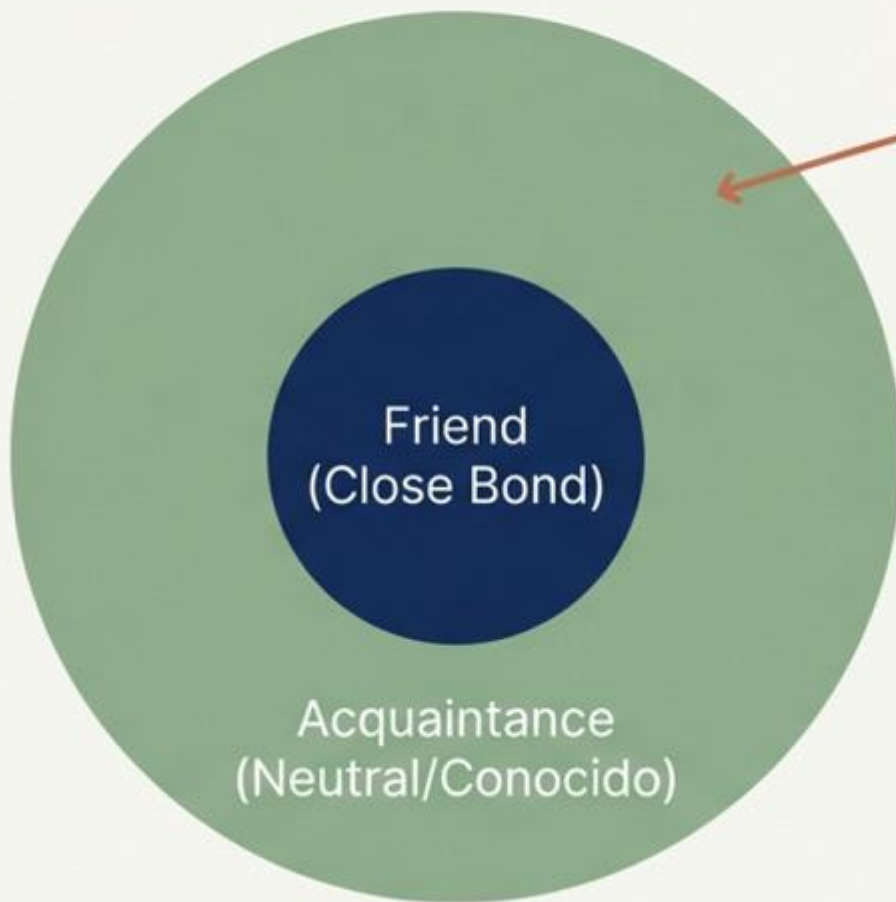
Properly = In depth / In detail.

Spanish Parallel:

“Tenemos que quedar un día.”



Knowing Your Circle

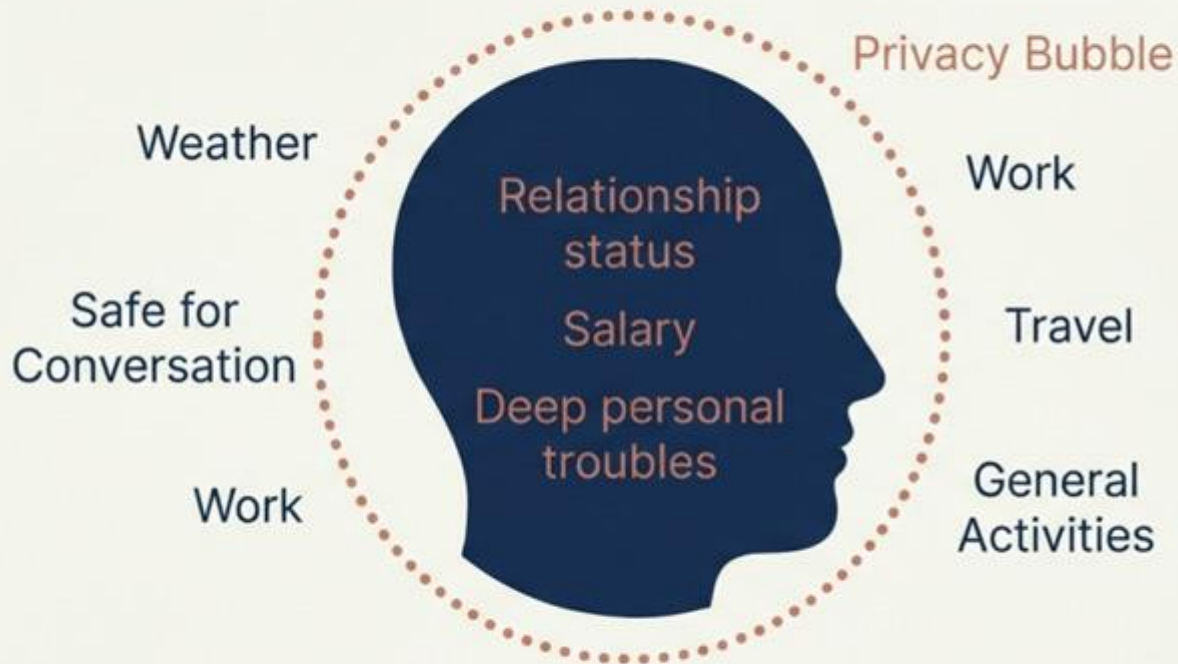


Spanish speakers often label this group "Friends". In English, "Friend" is a higher tier.

Key Vocabulary

1. **"To run into someone"** =
Meet unexpectedly
(Spanish: **Encontrarse con**)
2. **"To keep in touch"** =
Maintain contact

The Privacy Filter



Spanish = Quick to personal topics
English = Stays in the Safe Zone longer

Cultural Context

Anglo cultures (especially UK) value emotional restraint.

A negative answer to "How are you?" is culturally awkward unless talking to a close friend.

The Power of 'Quite' & 'Rather'

QUITE



RATHER



Spanish direct translations like '**bastante**' often miss the emotional temperature.

Softening the Blow: Indirect Questions

Direct	Where is the station?
Indirect	Do you happen to know <u>where the station is?</u>



Word Order Change:
Statement Form
(Subject + Verb).



DIRECT



INDIRECT

Spanish Parallel: "Me preguntaba si..."

Summary: The Mindset Shift



Metaphors

English treats life as a person (“How’s life **treating** you?”) and relationships as distance (“**Drifting apart**”).



Privacy

Respect the bubble. Don’t overshare too early. “How are you?” is a ritual, not therapy.



Phrasal Verbs

Essential, not optional. Use “**Run into**” instead of formal Latinate verbs.

Sounding Natural: Pronunciation & Tone

1. Intonation



Rising Tone = Friendly/Open



Flat Tone = Bored/Rude

2. Linking

Long time no see



Flows as one unit.

3. Contractions



Casual Speech

~~I have been~~

Formal

Next Steps

- ✓ Practice the dialogue aloud.
- ✓ Swap 'How are you?' for 'How have you been keeping?' this week.
- ✓ Use 'Run into' instead of 'Meet' regarding chance encounters.

“Fluency isn’t just vocabulary; it’s about matching the cultural frequency.”

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Lesson 1: Breaking the Ice Like a Native (Beyond “How are you?”)

In this C1-level lesson, we will explore how to reconnect naturally and confidently in English when meeting someone after a long time. At intermediate level, learners often rely on formulaic greetings such as “How are you?”, but advanced communication requires nuance, cultural awareness and flexibility. In this lesson, you will analyse a realistic dialogue set at a party, learn expressions such as “Hey, long time no see!”, “How have you been keeping?”, and “What have you been up to?”, and examine essential phrases like “I’ve been meaning to call you”, “We should catch up properly sometime”, and “How’s life treating you?”. We will also study key vocabulary such as “to keep in touch”, “to drift apart”, “to run into someone”, and “an acquaintance”. In addition, we will analyse the subtle differences between “How are you?” and “How are you doing?”, explore the nuanced use of “quite” and “rather”, review indirect questions for polite interaction, and compare these structures with Spanish equivalents. Cultural aspects such as small talk, privacy and expected responses will be examined in depth, including differences between British and American English where relevant.

Dialogue in English: Meeting at a Party After a Long Time

Imagine two former colleagues, Sarah and Tom, meeting at a friend’s party after several years.

Sarah: Hey, long time no see!

Tom: Sarah! Wow, it’s been ages. How have you been keeping?

Sarah: I’ve been good, thanks. Busy, though. What have you been up to?

Tom: Oh, you know, work, travelling a bit. I actually moved to Manchester last year.

Sarah: No way! I’ve been meaning to call you, but life just got in the way.

Tom: Tell me about it. We all get caught up in things.

Sarah: We should catch up properly sometime. Maybe grab a coffee?

Tom: Definitely. How's life treating you these days?

Sarah: Quite well, actually. It's been rather hectic, but I can't complain.

Tom: That's good to hear. I'm glad we ran into each other tonight.

This short exchange contains a wealth of pragmatic and grammatical detail that goes far beyond basic greetings.

Key Expressions for Reconnecting Naturally

"Hey, long time no see!" is an informal idiomatic greeting. Grammatically, it is not a complete sentence, yet it is widely accepted in spoken English. In Spanish, you might say "¡Cuánto tiempo sin verte!" Notice that English does not include a verb here. This elliptical structure gives the phrase its informal, spontaneous tone.

"How have you been keeping?" is more common in British English than in American English. Americans typically say "How have you been?" The addition of "keeping" suggests ongoing well-being and carries a slightly warmer tone. In Spanish, "¿Cómo has estado?" would be equivalent. However, in English, especially British English, this question often expects a brief, positive answer unless the relationship is very close.

"What have you been up to?" uses the Present Perfect Continuous. This tense emphasises recent activities over a period of time. Spanish speakers often struggle with this nuance because Spanish may simply use the present perfect ("¿Qué has hecho?") or a general question like "¿Qué tal todo?". In English, "What have you been up to?" specifically focuses on recent developments and ongoing activities.

"I've been meaning to call you" expresses an unfulfilled intention over time. The structure "have been + -ing + infinitive" suggests a repeated or long-standing intention. In Spanish, "He querido llamarte" or "Tenía intención de

llamarte” would be more natural than a literal continuous translation. English frequently uses continuous forms to convey emotional nuance or background intention.

“We should catch up properly sometime” is extremely common in both British and American English. “To catch up” means to exchange news and reconnect. “Properly” implies in depth. However, culturally, this phrase does not necessarily imply a concrete plan. It often functions as a polite social formula. In Spanish, “Tenemos que quedar un día” works similarly. Both languages use such expressions to maintain social harmony rather than to make immediate arrangements.

“How’s life treating you?” personifies life. This metaphor is deeply embedded in English. Spanish has a similar structure (“¿Qué tal te va la vida?”), but English speakers use this metaphorical phrasing very naturally in casual conversation.

Essential Vocabulary in Context

“To keep in touch” means “mantener el contacto”. It is widely used in both informal and semi-formal contexts. For example:

“We should keep in touch.”

“To drift apart” means to gradually lose closeness without conflict.

“We drifted apart after university.”

In Spanish, “Nos fuimos distanciando” captures the idea. The metaphor of drifting reflects the English conceptualisation of relationships as physical proximity.

“To run into someone” means to meet someone unexpectedly.

“I ran into Mark at the supermarket.”

In Spanish, “Me encontré con Mark por casualidad.” The phrasal verb structure is essential in English; Spanish does not use an equivalent phrasal construction.

“An acquaintance” refers to someone you know but not well. Spanish speakers often overuse “friend” when they mean “conocido”. In English, the distinction is socially significant. Calling someone a “friend” implies a closer bond than in many Spanish-speaking cultures.

How Are You? vs. How Are You Doing?

“How are you?” is often a formulaic greeting. In formal or semi-formal contexts in Britain, it functions almost as a ritual. The expected answer is short and positive: “I’m fine, thank you. And you?”

“How are you doing?” is slightly more casual and more common in American English, although it is also used in Britain. It suggests greater warmth and personal interest. However, even this question does not always require a detailed answer.

In Spanish, “¿Cómo estás?” and “¿Qué tal?” can function both as greetings and as genuine inquiries. Spanish speakers may give more detailed responses in everyday interactions. In English-speaking cultures, especially British culture, giving a very negative or detailed answer to a casual greeting may feel inappropriate unless the speaker is a close friend. This relates to the cultural value placed on privacy and emotional restraint.

The Use of “Quite” and “Rather” for Nuance

At advanced level, understanding intensifiers is essential. “Quite” and “rather” are particularly nuanced in British English.

“Quite” can mean “fairly” or “completely” depending on context.

“It’s quite cold.” (fairly cold)

“That’s quite impossible.” (completely impossible)

In British English, “quite good” often means moderately good. In American English, “quite good” may imply very good. Therefore, meaning depends on context and variety.

“Rather” often suggests a slightly stronger or unexpected degree.

“It’s rather late.”

“I’m rather tired.”

In American English, “rather” sounds more formal or literary. British English uses it more naturally in conversation.

Spanish equivalents such as “bastante” or “más bien” do not fully capture these nuances. Learners must internalise usage patterns rather than translate directly.

Small Talk and Cultural Expectations

Small talk plays a significant role in English-speaking cultures. Discussing neutral topics such as the weather, recent activities or general well-being is expected in social situations. Silence may feel uncomfortable.

In Spanish culture, conversation may move more quickly towards personal or emotional topics. In British culture, asking about salary, politics or intimate relationships early in a conversation may feel intrusive. The concept of “privacy” strongly influences communication style.

Responding “Good, thanks” even when you are not feeling well is part of this social convention. It maintains social harmony and avoids burdening acquaintances with personal issues. Only close friends or family members are likely to receive a more honest or detailed response.

Indirect Questions for Politeness

Indirect questions are essential for polite and sophisticated communication.

Direct: “Can you help me?”

Indirect: “I was wondering if you could help me.”

Direct: “Where is the station?”

Indirect: “Do you happen to know where the station is?”

Notice that in indirect questions, word order becomes that of a statement: “where the station is” (not “where is the station”).

Spanish also uses indirect forms (“Me preguntaba si podrías...”), but English relies on them more frequently in polite interaction. British English in particular values indirectness.

“Do you happen to know...?” softens the request by implying that the information may be accidental. These subtle pragmatic markers are crucial at C1 level.

Additional Nuances: Understatement and Tone

British English often uses understatement. Instead of saying “It was amazing”, a speaker might say “It was quite good”. Tone and context determine meaning. Spanish speakers may perceive this as less enthusiastic, but culturally it can signal satisfaction.

American English tends to use stronger intensifiers such as “really”, “super”, or “awesome”. British English often prefers moderation.

Intonation also matters. Rising intonation in greetings conveys friendliness. A flat or falling tone may signal closure or lack of interest.

Present Perfect and Time Perspective

Notice the dominance of the Present Perfect in reconnection conversations:

“How have you been?”

“What have you been up to?”

“I’ve been meaning to call you.”

British English strongly favours the Present Perfect when discussing a time period connected to the present. American English sometimes uses the Past Simple in similar contexts (“Did you eat yet?” vs British “Have you eaten yet?”). Understanding these differences is essential for advanced fluency.