

7 Present Simple or Present Continuous

Compare the Present Simple and the Present Continuous:

- 1 We use the Present Simple to talk about facts (things which are true at any time):

Anna speaks good Spanish.
Journalists write newspaper articles.
I come from Norway. (= I am Norwegian).

- 2 We use the Present Simple for situations that exist over a long time, and for actions that are repeated (e.g. people's habits, or events on a timetable):

Mike works for an advertising company.
He lives in Paris. (= His home is in Paris.)



He lives in Paris.

Jane travels a lot in her job.
I do a lot of sport.

We can use words like **usually, often, every**:

We usually go out to dinner at weekends.
I often go to football matches on Sundays.
The buses leave every hour.

- 3 We use the Present Simple with thinking and feeling verbs (e.g. **know, forget, notice, understand, recognise, remember, like, love, hate, want, prefer, need**):

I don't know which train to catch.

- 4 We use **have** in the Present Simple to talk about possession:

I have a new car.

We use **think** in the Present Simple to express opinions:

I think she's interesting.

We use the Present Continuous to talk about actions in progress at the time of speaking:

Anna's busy. She's speaking on the phone.
What are you writing? ~ A letter to Jane.
Look! The bus is coming.

We use the Present Continuous for things that continue for a limited period of time around now (e.g. holidays, visits, temporary jobs, school or university courses):

John is working in the USA for six months.
He's living in New York.



He's living in New York.

Jane's travelling around Europe for a month.
I'm doing a one-year course in tourism.
We're painting the flat.

We do not usually use the Present Continuous with thinking and feeling verbs:

NOT *I'm knowing someone who lives in Venice.*

We use **have** and **think** in the Present Continuous to talk about actions:

I'm having fun.
He can't come, he's having dinner at the moment.
I am thinking about my work.

Practice

- A Complete the sentences with the Present Simple (*I do*) or the Present Continuous (*I am doing*).

- ▶ I *leave*..... (leave) home at 7 o'clock every morning.
- 1 She usually (work) in the Sales Department in London, but at the moment she (do) a training course in Bristol.
 - 2 Linda (wash) her hair every day.
 - 3 He (try) very hard in every game that he (play).
 - 4 Excuse me. I think that you (sit) in my seat.

- 5 (you/listen) to the radio very often?
 6 Don't talk to me now. I (write) an important letter.
 7 Why (they/drive) on the left in Britain?
 8 It (not/get) dark at this time of year until about 10 o'clock.
 9 It usually (rain) here a lot, but it (not/rain) now.
 10 A: What are you doing?
 B: I (bake) a cake. Why (you/smile)?
 (I/do) something wrong?

B This is Anna's first letter in English to David. There are some mistakes in it. Cross out the incorrect forms and write in the correct form. Put a tick (✓) if the form of the verb is correct.

Dear David,

I live (▶)✓..... in a large flat in Rome. I'm ~~having~~ (▶) *have*..... two sisters. They are called Rosa and Maria. We are **getting up** (1)..... at seven o'clock every morning, and we **have** (2)..... coffee and a small breakfast. I **leave** (3)..... the flat at eight and walk to the university. I **am finishing** (4)..... classes at five every day, and I **arrive** (5)..... home at six. This month I **work** (6)..... very hard for my first exams.

At the moment, I **eat** (7)..... breakfast in the kitchen of our flat: my mother **drinks** (8)..... coffee, and my sisters are **reading** (9)..... magazines.

On Saturday afternoons I **am playing** (10)..... tennis with my friends, or I **go** (11)..... to the cinema. Today, I'm going to see a new English film! Sometimes I **am watching** (12)..... American films on TV, but I'm **not understanding** (13)..... the words! **Are you liking** (14)..... films?

With best wishes,
 Anna

C Write the sentences using the Present Simple or the Present Continuous.

▶ (Usually she/work/at the office, but this week she/work/at home)

Usually she works at the office, but this week she's working at home......

1 (You/not/eat/very much at the moment. Are you ill?)

2 (She/know/three words in Italian!)

3 (I/take/the bus to work this week, but usually I/walk.)

4 (I/study/Japanese this year. It's very difficult.)

5 (you/watch/the television at the moment?)

6 (I/not/remember/the name of the hotel.)

7 (She/speak/three languages.)

8 (The sun/shine/. It's a beautiful day!)
