

Present Simple

The present simple is used:

1. to express an action which happens again and again, that is a habit. It is often found with these time expressions:
always, every day, usually, sometimes, never
I sometimes walk to work.
2. to express a fact which is always true, or true for a long time.
The sun rises in the East. (always true)
I come from Spain. (true for a long time)
3. to express a future meaning with timetables.
The train leaves at four.

Third person singular: Spelling of verb + -s

1. the normal rule is to add-s to the base form of the verb:
want wants, eat eats
2. Add -es to verbs that end in -ss, -sh, -ch, -x, and -o.
Kiss kisses, go goes.
3. Verbs that end in a consonant + y changes to -ies.
Carry carries, fly flies.
But verbs that end in a vowel + y only add -s.
Buy buys, say says
4. Have : has

Adverbs of frequency and time expressions

We often use adverbs of frequency with the present simple.
(0%) Never rarely not often sometimes often
usually always (100%)

They go before the main verb:

- I **usually** go to bed at eleven o'clock.
- I don't **often** go swimming.
- Does she **usually** go to the gym?

But after the verb **to be**:

- He is **never** late for school.
- He isn't **always** late for school.
- Is he **always** late for school?

Sometimes and **usually** can also come at the beginning of the sentence or the end.

- **Sometimes** we play cards.
- We play cards **sometimes**.

Other frequency expressions are placed at the end of the sentence (also found at the beginning):

Every day/week/month/year/Monday ...

- He phones me **every day**.

Once/twice/three times a week / month / year.....

- He goes to the gym **once a week**.

Present Continuous

The present Continuous is used:

1. to express an activity that is happening now.
Ex. You can't speak to Jane. She *is having* a bath
2. to express an activity or situation that is true now, but it is not necessarily happening at the moment of speaking.
Ex. Don't take that book. Peter *is reading* it.
3. To express a temporary activity.
Ex. *I'm living* with my friends until I find a place of my own.
4. To express a planned future arrangement.
Ex. We *are meeting* at one outside the restaurant.
5. To describe an annoying habit. A frequency adverb is necessary.
Ex. You *are always borrowing* money from me.

Time expressions:

- Now, at the moment, at present, nowadays
- today, tonight, this week / month..., next week..., on Monday....

Rules for the –ing form:

1. The normal rule is to add -ing to the base form of the verb.
Go going, wear wearing
2. Verbs that end in one -e lose the -e.
smoke smoking, come coming

But verbs that end in -ee don't lose an -e.
Agree agreeing, see seeing
3. In verbs of one syllable, with one vowel and one consonant, the consonant is doubled.
Stop stopping, get getting

But if the final consonant is -y or -w, it is not doubled.
Play playing, show showing.
4. Be careful with verbs like
lie lying, die dying

Problems with Present Simple and Present Continuous

State verbs

There are some verbs that are usually only used in the Present Simple. This is because their meanings are related to states or conditions which are facts and not activities.

These verbs are:

- **Verbs of thinking and opinion:** believe, think, understand, suppose, expect, agree, doubt, know, remember, forget, mean, imagine, realize, deserve, prefer.
- **Verbs of emotion and feeling:** like, love, hate, care, hope, wish, want, admit.
- **Verbs of having and being:** belong, own, have, possess, contain, cost, seem, appear, need, depend on, weigh, come from, resemble.
- **Verbs of the senses:** look, hear, taste, smell, feel

Some of these verbs can be used in the present continuous, but with a change of meaning. In the Continuous, the verb expresses an activity, not a state.

- I think you are right. (= opinion)
- We are thinking of going to the cinema. (= considering, mental activity)
- He has a lot of money (= possession)
- She is having a bath (= activity)
- I see what you mean (= understand)
- Are you seeing Peter tomorrow? (= activity)
- The soup tastes awful(= state)
- I'm tasting the soup to see if it needs salt (= activity)
- Tim is naughty. (= state)
- Tim is being rather difficult at the moment. (= behave)

The difference between Simple and Continuous can be one of attitude:

- Do you sleep a lot? (your general habit)
- Are you sleeping enough? (your situation at the moment)

PRESENT SIMPLE – PRESENT CONTINUOUS

1. Complete the email. Use the present simple or present continuous.

Hi

How are you? I usually _____(work) on Mondays, but today I'm at home. I _____(sit) in the kitchen, and I _____(write) emails to friends, because I've finally got some free time.

Everyone's fine. Karl's very busy in his new job. He _____(go) to a different factory every week. He _____(visit) Dresden this week. Jola _____(look) for a new job at the moment. She _____(buy) a newspaper every day to read the job adverts. Tobi is still at university. He _____(not work) hard most of the time, but at the moment he _____(study) very hard, because he's got exams.

What about you? What _____(you/do) at the moment?

Write soon.

Petra.

2. Complete the following sentences using the Present simple and Present Continuous.

- a. _____(you/smoke)? No, never.
- b.- "What _____(you /eat)?"
- "A cheese sandwich."
- c. - "Where _____ she _____(work)?"
- "She _____(work) in a school. But these days she _____(not/work), because she is on holiday."
- d. - "Bonjour!"
- "Sorry, I _____French." (not speak)
- e. - "Your English _____(get) better."
- "Oh, thanks!"
- f. Water _____(boil) at 100°C.
- g. - "_____ (you/ play)golf?"
- "Yes, but not very well."

3. Choose the correct form of the verbs.

Dear Karen,

I'm having / I have a great time in England. My university term isn't starting / doesn't start until the autumn, so I'm taking / I take the opportunity to improve my English. I'm staying / I stay with some English friends who are owning / own a farm. On weekdays I'm catching / I catch a bus into Torquay to go to language classes. I'm making / I make good progress, I think. My friends say / are saying my pronunciation is much better than when I arrived, and I'm understanding / I understand almost everything now. At weekends I'm helping / I help on the farm. At the moment they are harvesting / they harvest the corn and they are needing / they need all the help they can get. It's quite hard work, but I'm liking / I like it. And I'm developing / I develop some strong muscles!

Do you come / are you coming to visit me at Christmas? I'm spending / I spend the winter holiday here at the farm. My friends are wanting / want to meet you and there's plenty of space. But you must bring your warmest clothes. It's getting / it gets very cold here in the winter.

Let me know as soon as you're deciding / you decide. And tell me what you are doing / you do these days.

Do you miss me?

Love
Paul

4. Put each verb in brackets into the most suitable form, either present simple, or present continuous

I[1] (think) am thinking of moving house, because at the moment my neighbours [2] (drive) _____ me crazy! I [3] (live) _____ in a small flat, and noise[4] (come) _____ through the walls very easily. They [5] (not seem) _____ to realise that I [6] (go) _____ to bed early and they [7] (have) _____ parties nearly every night, and [8] (make) _____ a lot of noise. It's after midnight now, and I [9] (try) _____ to go to sleep, but it's impossible. People [10] (dance) _____ and [11] (shout) _____ next door, and the floor [12] (shake) _____. When I [13] (complain) _____ to the people next door, they [14] (tell) _____ me that I [15] (not understand) _____. "We [16] (only have) _____ fun," they [17] (say) _____ "you [18] (complain) _____ about nothing". They [19] (not understand) _____ me. That's why I [20] (look) _____ for a new place to live.