

Unit
4Present continuous and present simple 2
(I am doing and I do)

A

We use continuous forms for actions and happenings that have started but not finished (they are eating / it is raining etc.). Some verbs (for example, know and like) are not normally used in this way. We don't say 'I am knowing' or 'they are liking'; we say 'I know', 'they like'.

The following verbs are not normally used in the present continuous:

like	love	hate	want	need	prefer
know	realise	suppose	mean	understand	believe
belong	fit	contain	consist	seem	

- I'm hungry. I want something to eat. (not I'm wanting)
- Do you understand what I mean?
- Ann doesn't seem very happy at the moment.

B

Think

When **think** means 'believe' or 'have an opinion', we do not use the continuous:

- I think Mary is Canadian, but I'm not sure. (not I'm thinking)
- What do you think about my plan? (= What is your opinion?)

When **think** means 'consider', the continuous is possible:

- I'm thinking about what happened. I often think about it.
- Nicky is thinking of giving up her job. (= she is considering it)

C

He is selfish and He is being selfish

He's **being** = He's behaving / He's acting. Compare:

- I can't understand why he's being so selfish. He isn't usually like that.
(being selfish = behaving selfishly at the moment)
- He never thinks about other people. He is very selfish. (not He is being)
(= He is selfish generally, not only at the moment)

We use **am/is/are being** to say how somebody is *behaving*. It is not usually possible in other sentences:

- It's hot today. (not It is being hot)
- Sarah is very tired. (not is being tired)

D

See hear smell taste

We normally use the present simple (not continuous) with these verbs:

- Do you see that man over there? (not Are you seeing)
- This room smells. Let's open a window.

We often use can + see/hear/smell/taste:

- I can hear a strange noise. Can you hear it?

E

Look feel

You can use the present simple or continuous to say how somebody looks or feels now:

- You look well today. or You're looking well today.
- How do you feel now? or How are you feeling now?

but

- I usually feel tired in the morning. (not I'm usually feeling)

Exercises

Unit 4

4.1 Are the underlined verbs right or wrong? Correct them where necessary.

1 Nicky is thinking of giving up her job. OK
 2 Are you believing in God?
 3 I'm feeling hungry. Is there anything to eat?
 4 This sauce is great. It's tasting really good.
 5 I'm thinking this is your key. Am I right?

4.2 Use the words in brackets to make sentences. (You should also study Unit 3 before you do this exercise.)

1		
(you / not / seem / very happy today) You don't seem very happy today.		(what / you / do?) Be quiet! I think
3		
(who / this umbrella / belong to?) I have no idea.		(the dinner / smell / good)
5		
Excuse me. (anybody / sit / there?) No, it's free.		(these gloves / not / fit / me) They're too small.

4.3 Put the verb into the correct form, present continuous or present simple.

1 Are you hungry? Do you want (you / want) something to eat?
 2 Don't put the dictionary away. I (use) it.
 3 Don't put the dictionary away. I (need) it.
 4 Who is that man? What (he / want)?
 5 Who is that man? Why (he / look) at us?
 6 Alan says he's 80 years old, but nobody (believe) him.
 7 She told me her name, but I (not / remember) it now.
 8 I (think) of selling my car. Would you be interested in buying it?
 9 I (think) you should sell your car. You (not / use) it very often.
 10 Air (consist) mainly of nitrogen and oxygen.

4.4 Complete the sentences using the most suitable form of be. Sometimes you must use the simple (am/is/are) and sometimes the continuous is more suitable (am/is/are being).

1 I can't understand why he's being so selfish. He isn't usually like that.
 2 Sarah very nice to me at the moment. I wonder why.
 3 You'll like Debbie when you meet her. She very nice.
 4 You're usually very patient, so why so unreasonable about waiting ten more minutes?
 5 Why isn't Steve at work today? ill?