

Present tenses (**I am doing / I do**) for the future

## A

Present continuous (**I am doing**) with a future meaning

This is Ben's diary for next week.

He **is playing** tennis on Monday afternoon.  
 He **is going** to the dentist on Tuesday morning.  
 He **is having** dinner with Kate on Friday.

In all these examples, Ben has already decided and arranged to do these things.

**I'm doing** something (tomorrow) = I have already decided and arranged to do it:

- A: What **are you doing** on Saturday evening? (not What do you do)  
 B: **I'm going** to the theatre. (not I go)
- A: What time **is** Katherine **arriving** tomorrow?  
 B: Half past ten. **I'm meeting** her at the station.
- I'm not working** tomorrow, so we can go out somewhere.
- Steve **isn't playing** football next Saturday. He's hurt his leg.

'**I'm going to** (do)' is also possible in these sentences:

- What **are you going to do** on Saturday evening?

But the present continuous is more natural when we talk about arrangements. See Unit 20B.

Do not use **will** to talk about what you have arranged to do:

- What **are you doing** this evening? (not What will you do)
- Alex **is getting** married next month. (not will get)

You can also use the present continuous for an action *just before you begin to do it*. This happens especially with verbs of movement (**go/come/leave** etc.):

- I'm tired. **I'm going** to bed now. Goodnight. (not I go to bed now)
- 'Jess, are you ready yet?' 'Yes, **I'm coming**.' (not I come)

## B

Present simple (**I do**) with a future meaning

We use the present simple when we talk about timetables, programmes etc. (for public transport, cinemas etc.):

- My train **leaves** at 11.30, so I need to be at the station by 11.15.
- What time **does** the film **start** this evening?
- It's Wednesday tomorrow. / Tomorrow **is** Wednesday.

You can use the present simple to talk about people if their plans are fixed like a timetable:

- I **start** my new job on Monday.
- What time **do** you **finish** work tomorrow?

But the continuous is more usual for personal arrangements:

- What time **are** you **meeting** Ann tomorrow? (not do you meet)

Compare:

## Present continuous

- What time **are you arriving**?
- I'm going** to the cinema this evening.

## Present simple

- What time **does the train arrive**?
- The film starts** at 8.15 (this evening).

# Exercises

19.1 A friend of yours is planning to go on holiday soon. You ask her about her plans. Use the words in brackets to make your questions.



- 1 (where / go?) Where are you going?
- 2 (how long / go for?)
- 3 (when / leave?)
- 4 (go / alone?)
- 5 (travel / by car?)
- 6 (where / stay?)

Scotland.  
Ten days.  
Next Friday.  
No, with a friend.  
No, by train.  
In a hotel.

19.2 Tom wants you to visit him, but you are very busy. Look at your diary for the next few days and explain to him why you can't come.



TOM: Can you come on Monday evening?  
you: Sorry, but I'm playing volleyball. (1)

TOM: What about Tuesday evening then?  
you: No, not Tuesday. I (2)

TOM: And Wednesday evening?  
you: (3)

TOM: Well, are you free on Thursday?  
you: I'm afraid not. (4)

19.3 Have you arranged to do anything at these times? Write sentences about yourself.

- 1 (this evening) I'm going out this evening. or I'm not doing anything this evening.
- 2 (tomorrow morning) I
- 3 (tomorrow evening)
- 4 (next Sunday)
- 5 (choose another day or time)

19.4 Put the verb into the more suitable form, present continuous or present simple.

- 1 I'm going (I / go) to the cinema this evening.
- 2 Does the film start (the film / start) at 3.30 or 4.30?
- 3 (we / have) a party next Saturday. Would you like to come?
- 4 The art exhibition (finish) on 3 May.
- 5 (I / not / go) out this evening.  
(I / stay) at home.
- 6 ' (you / do) anything tomorrow morning?' 'No, I'm free. Why?'
- 7 (we / go) to a concert tonight.  
(it / start) at 7.30.
- 8 (I / leave) now. I've come to say goodbye.
- 9 A: Have you seen Liz recently?  
B: No, but (we / meet) for lunch next week.
- 10 You are on the train to London and you ask another passenger:  
Excuse me. What time (this train / get) to London?
- 11 You are talking to Helen:  
Helen, (I / go) to the supermarket. (you / come) with me?
- 12 You and a friend are watching television. You say:  
I'm bored with this programme. What time (it / end)?
- 13 (I / not / use) the car this evening, so you can have it.
- 14 Sue (come) to see us tomorrow.  
(she / travel) by train and her train (arrive) at 10.15.