

Explanations

Present simple: frequency adverbs

- Frequency adverbs are often used with the present simple. They explain how often someone does an action, or something happens.

<i>always</i>	✓✓✓✓✓	<i>I always get up at 7.00.</i>
<i>often</i>	✓✓✓✓	<i>Pat often goes to football matches.</i>
<i>usually</i>	✓✓✓	<i>It usually rains when I go on holiday!</i>
<i>sometimes</i>	✓✓	<i>We sometimes eat pizza for lunch.</i>
<i>rarely</i>	✓	<i>Jane rarely listens to jazz.</i>
<i>never</i>	–	<i>My bus never arrives on time.</i>

- Note in the above examples that the frequency adverb comes before the verb. With the verb *be* the adverb comes after.

*Jim **is usually** late.*

- Other frequency adverbs are: *frequently* (✓✓✓✓), *normally* (✓✓✓), *occasionally* (✓✓), *seldom* (✓), *hardly ever* (✓).

State verbs and action verbs

- A state is when something stays the same. An action is when something happens. State verbs are not usually used in any continuous form.

I know what you mean. (NOT ~~*I am knowing what you're meaning.*~~)

Examples of state verbs are:

- senses: *appear, hear, look like, see, taste*
- feeling: *like, hate, love, prefer, want, wish*
- thinking: *agree, believe, forget, know, think, understand*
- possession: *belong to, contain, have, own*
- being: *be, exist*
- other: *cost, depend on, mean, need*

- Some of the verbs in the previous list can have a 'state' meaning and an 'action' meaning. Examples include *be, have, taste, think*.

*I **have** two sisters.* (permanent state)

*I'm **having** problems with this computer.* (temporary action)

- Sometimes state verbs can describe temporary feelings.

*How are you **getting on** at your new school?*

*I **hate**/I'm **hating** it!*

Present simple or continuous?

Compare:

Present simple

permanent
habits and routines
facts that are always true
general situations

I live in Budapest.

I'm living in Budapest.

This plane lands in Frankfurt.

We're landing.

Present continuous

temporary
in progress now
events happening at the moment
a particular situation

(all the time)

(for a few months)

(routine)

(in progress now)

Present continuous: future meanings

- The present continuous can be used to describe a fixed future arrangement. There is usually a future time expression.
Paul is leaving early tomorrow morning.
My parents are buying me a mountain bike for my birthday.
This usage is common when we describe social arrangements.
Are you doing anything on Saturday? We're going skating.

Other problems

- *feel*
There is almost no difference of meaning between the simple and continuous.
I feel awful! *I'm feeling awful!*
How do you feel now? *How are you feeling now?*
- Present continuous or present perfect continuous?
Sue is staying with Jill.
(in progress now, and will continue)
Sue has been staying with Jill since March.
(in progress up to now, and may or may not continue)
- Present continuous with *always*
We can use *always* with the present continuous when we are exaggerating or complaining. We emphasize *always* in speech in this case.
You're always forgetting your keys!
- Present simple in narratives
In speech we can use the present simple to make a story or joke appear more immediate and interesting, even though the events were in the past. This is also used in written summaries such as plots of television series.
A man walks into a bar and asks for a glass of water. The barman says ...
The story so far: Michael meets Susan in the library and tells her about the missing earrings ...

→ SEE ALSO

Grammar 4: Past time 1
Grammar 5: Past time 2
Grammar 6: Present perfect 1
Grammar 8: Future 1

Practice

1 Underline the correct sentence for each situation.

- a) You want to invite a friend to your party on Friday. You say:
 - 1 I have a party on Friday. Do you want to come?
 - 2 I'm having a party on Friday. Do you want to come?
- b) You find a wallet on your desk and ask the people nearby:
 - 1 Who does this wallet belong to?
 - 2 Who is this wallet belonging to?
- c) A friend invites you to a snack bar at lunch time. You say:
 - 1 Thanks, but I always go home.
 - 2 Thanks, but I'm always going home.
- d) A friend opens the door and says: What are you doing? You reply:
 - 1 I work as a secretary.
 - 2 I'm repairing the computer.
- e) You haven't decided yet about buying a new bike. You say:
 - 1 I think about it.
 - 2 I'm thinking about it.
- f) A friend asks: Do you like lemon tea? You reply:
 - 1 I prefer tea with milk.
 - 2 I'm preferring tea with milk.
- g) A friend asks you if you have finished the book she lent you. You say:
 - 1 Sorry, I still read it.
 - 2 Sorry, I'm still reading it.
- h) It's a hot day, but a friend has a heavy coat on. You ask:
 - 1 Why do you wear a heavy coat?
 - 2 Why are you wearing a heavy coat?

2 Underline the correct word or phrase in each sentence.

- a) That can't be right! I don't believe/I'm not believing it!
- b) Caroline can't swim today. She has/is having a cold.
- c) See you in the morning. I leave/I'm leaving now.
- d) What do you do/are you doing? If you drop it, it will explode!
- e) Stop doing that, Bill! You're/You're being very silly.
- f) I drive/I'm driving! You can sit in the back with Martin.
- g) What do we eat/are we eating this evening? I'm really hungry!
- h) You're a great cook! This cake tastes/is tasting wonderful.
- i) Where do you go/are you going? I haven't finished speaking to you!
- j) Chemistry is hard. I don't understand/I'm not understanding it.

3 Put each verb in brackets into the present simple or present continuous.

- a) Ugh, don't show me that picture! I (hate) *hate* mice!
- b) Who (you, go) to the match on Saturday with?
- c) In the winter, what (you, wear) ?
- d) I can't stand horror films. I (think) they're silly!
- e) Diana (not, usually, sit) next to Ellen.
- f) Why (you, look at) me like that?
- g) Excuse me. (this bus, stop) outside the station?
- h) I (not take) the bus to school today.

4 Match each sentence (a-h) with a suitable response (1-8).

- a) What do you usually do on your birthday? *1*.....
- b) Would you like to meet again on Saturday?
- c) What do you usually do when there is an earthquake?
- d) Have you finished your homework?
- e) What are you doing?
- f) What are you doing on Friday?
- g) Are you in the school basketball team?
- h) What do you do?

- 1 I have a party.
- 2 I lie under the table.
- 3 I work in a travel agency.
- 4 Yes, we play every Friday.
- 5 I'm still doing it.
- 6 It's hot in here. I'm opening some windows.
- 7 I'm going back to Canada tomorrow.
- 8 I'm having a party.

5 Put each verb in brackets into the present simple or present continuous.

- a) What (usually, you, do) *do..you..usually..do* at the weekend?
- b) Don't worry about the cat. It (only eat) once a day.
- c) I can't work out the answer. (you, know) what it is?
- d) What's the matter? Why (you, stare) at me like that?
- e) (you, speak) English? I'm looking for a hotel.
- f) Elena (stay) with me while her house is being decorated.
- g) You should go on a diet. (you, put) on weight.
- h) (they, speak) French or German? I can't tell the difference.