

present simple and continuous, action and non-action verbs

present simple: *I live, he works, etc.*

- 1 I **work** in a bank. She **studies** Russian. (1 10))
We **don't have** any pets. Jack **doesn't wear** glasses.
Where **do you live**? **Does** your brother **have** a car?
- 2 She usually **has** cereal for breakfast.
I **'m** never late for work.
We only **eat out** about once a month.

- 1 We use the present simple for things that are always true or happen regularly.
- Remember the spelling rules for third person singular, e.g. *lives, studies, watches*.
 - Use **ASI** (Auxiliary, Subject, Infinitive) or **QUASI** (Question word, Auxiliary, Subject, Infinitive) to help you with word order in questions. *Do you know David? What time does the film start?*
- 2 We often use the present simple with adverbs of frequency, e.g. *usually, never*, or expressions of frequency, e.g. *every day, once a week*.
- Adverbs of frequency go **before** the main verb, and **after** *be*.
 - Expressions of frequency usually go at the end of the sentence or verb phrase.

present continuous: *be + verb + -ing*

- A Who **are you waiting** for? (1 11))
B I **'m waiting** for a friend.
A **Is** your sister still **going out** with Adam?
B No, they **broke up**. She **isn't going out** with anyone at the moment.

- We use the present continuous (not the present simple) for actions in progress at the time of speaking, e.g. things that are happening now or around now. These are normally temporary, not habitual actions.
- Remember the spelling rules, e.g. *living, studying, getting*.
- We also use the present continuous for future arrangements (see 1B).

action and non-action verbs

- A What **are you cooking**? (1 12))
B I **'m making** pasta.
A Great! I **love** pasta.
A What **are you looking** for?
B My car keys.
A I'll help you in a moment.
B But I **need** them now!

- Verbs which describe **actions**, e.g. *cook, make*, can be used in the present simple or continuous. *I'm making the lunch. I usually make the lunch at the weekend.*
- Verbs which describe **states or feelings** (not actions), e.g. *love, need, be*, are **non-action verbs**. They are not usually used in the present continuous, even if we mean 'now'.
- Common non-action verbs are *agree, be, believe, belong, depend, forget, hate, hear, know, like, love, matter, mean, need, prefer, realize, recognize, remember, seem, suppose*.

Verbs that can be both action and non-action

A few verbs have an action and a non-action meaning, e.g. *have* and *think*.

I have a cat now. = possession (non-action)

I can't talk now. I'm having lunch. = an action

I think this music's great. = opinion (non-action)

What are you thinking about? = an action

- a Complete the sentences with the present simple or present continuous forms of the verbs in brackets.

We **don't go** to Chinese restaurants very often. (not go)

- These days, most children _____ too many fizzy drinks. (have)
- _____ you _____ any vitamins at the moment? (take)
- Don't eat that spinach if you _____ it. (not like)
- _____ your boyfriend _____ how to cook fish? (know)
- We _____ takeaway pizzas during the week. (not get)
- What _____ your mother _____? It smells great! (make)
- You look sad. What _____ you _____ about? (think)
- The diet in my country _____ worse. (get)
- How often _____ you _____ seafood? (eat)
- I _____ usually _____ fish. (not cook)

- b Circle the correct form, present simple or continuous.

I don't believe / I'm not believing that you cooked this meal yourself.

- Come on, let's order. The waiter comes / is coming.
- Kate doesn't want / isn't wanting to have dinner now. She isn't hungry.
- The head chef is ill, so he doesn't work / isn't working today.
- The bill seems / is seeming very high to me.
- We've had an argument, so we don't speak / aren't speaking to each other at the moment.
- My mum thinks / is thinking my diet is awful these days.
- Do we need / Are we needing to go shopping today?
- Can I call you back? I have / I'm having lunch right now.
- I didn't use to like oily fish, but now I love / I'm loving it!
- What do you cook / are you cooking? It smells delicious!

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What's the difference?

Present Simple	Present Continuous
Things which are always true: Water boils at 100 degrees.	Things which are happening at the moment of speaking: The water is boiling now, so you can put in the pasta.
Permanent situations (or nearly permanent, true for a few years at least): Julie lives in London.	Temporary situations: - Julie is living in Paris for a few months (usually she lives in London). Situations which are slowly changing: - I am getting better and better at speaking English.
Habits or things we do regularly: I drink coffee every morning.	Temporary or new habits: - I am drinking too much coffee these days because I'm so busy at work. Annoying habits (usually with 'always'): - My flatmate is always leaving the kitchen in a mess!
Future events which are part of a timetable: - My plane leaves at eight tonight. To talk about the future after certain words ('when' 'until' 'after' 'before' 'as soon as'): - I'll call you when I get home.	Definite future plans: I am meeting John after class today.
To talk about what happens in books, plays and films: At the end of the book, the detective catches the killer.	To talk about people in pictures and photos: In this photo, my mother is walking beside a lake.

Remember:

We use the present simple with stative verbs. We can't use any continuous tense (including the present continuous tense, of course) with stative verbs.

Choose the present simple or present continuous.

1. (You / come) _____ tonight?
2. (He / eat) _____ rice every day?
3. I (work) _____ at the moment.
4. (He / come) _____ to London often?
5. He (play) _____ tennis now.
6. (You / come) _____ to the cinema later?
7. They (not / come) _____ to the party tomorrow.
8. He (not / play) _____ golf now.
9. (You / play) _____ tennis this Sunday?
10. They (go) _____ to a restaurant every Saturday.
11. She (not / go) _____ to the cinema very often.
12. You usually (arrive) _____ late.
13. He normally (eat) _____ dinner at home.
14. (You / study) _____ every night?
15. (They / work) _____ late usually?
16. You (not / go) _____ out later.
17. I (not / work) _____ tonight.
18. (She / work) _____ at the moment?
19. I (not / drink) _____ coffee very often.
20. Julie (sleep) _____ now.