1 Simple vs. continuous

Simple present

We use the **simple present** to talk about repeated actions or permanent situations in the present:

I always **travel** to work by car. I **live** in Madrid. I sometimes **play** soccer on Sundays.

Present continuous

We use the **present continuous** to talk about actions happening now or around the present time:

I'**m learning** English at the moment. I live in Madrid, but I'**m staying** in Barcelona this week.

Only verbs of action can be used in the continuous form, e.g. **I'm working**, **she's singing**, etc. Some verbs such as **believe**, **know**, and **love** are states, not actions. **State verbs** can normally only be used in the simple form (**I love**, not **I'm loving**).

State verbs: *want, like, love, hate, prefer, know, realize, understand, believe, remember, seem, mean, etc.*

Some verbs can be **action** or **state** verbs, with a change in meaning:

STATES

I **think** you need to relax more. (= I believe, in my opinion)

I **see** that you are very tired. (= my observation)

She **is** stupid. (= her general character)

ACTIONS

What **are you thinking** about? (think = 'use your brain')

'Where is Anne?' '**I'm seeing** her right now.' (= 'I'm meeting her')

She is being stupid. (= 'she is behaving in this way right now')

Dialogue

A: What **do you do**?

B: I'**m** a salesman. I **live** and **work** in Rome.

A: Interesting. So, what **are you doing** here in London?

B: I'**m** just **visiting**. I **love** this city.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Practice 3 - State verbs

Put the verbs in brackets in the simple present or present continuous:

1. We _____ (need) to wait. I _____ (not/know) how long.
2. I _____ (not/like) this dress. I _____ (prefer) that one.
3. I _____ (not/understand) what that _____ (mean). Can you explain it?
4. Janet _____ (be) single. She _____ (not/see) anyone at the moment.
5. Tom _____ (think) of emigrating to Australia.
6. Right now, I _____ (not/see) a problem. I _____ (think) everything is fine.
7. Why _____ (she/be) here? I _____ (not/remember) inviting her.
8. I _____ (see) that you _____ (be) very busy at the moment. I'll come back later.
9. Don't use this tool. It _____ (seem) to be broken.
10. _____ (you/realize) what that _____ (mean)?
11. You _____ (be) normally a very polite person. Why _____ (you/be) so rude right now?
12. Josh _____ (love) Alice. Unfortunately, Alice _____ (not/think) much of him.

Practice 4

Complete the questions below using the simple present or present continuous. Then give true answers.

1. You / often / wear / jeans?
2. You / wear / jeans / right now?
3. It / often / rain / in your country?
4. It / rain / at the moment?
5. You / ever / work / on Saturdays?
6. You / work / today?
7. You / sometimes / think / about moving to another country?
8. You / think / about moving to another country / at the moment?
9. You / see / the dentist / this week?
10. You / sometimes / play / tennis?
11. You / play / tennis now?

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