

PRESENT SIMPLE VS. CONTINUOUS



Scan to review worksheet

Expemo code:
13HK-R2TE-Q7NJ



1

Simple vs. continuous

Present simple

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

I always **commute** by car.

I **live** in Madrid.

I sometimes **work** at weekends.

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.

Pamela is **working** on an important project this week.

Only verbs of action can be used in the continuous form, e.g. I'm **working**, she's **writing**, etc. Some verbs such as **believe**, **know**, **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, realise, understand, believe, remember, seem, suppose, mean...*

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

STATES

I **think** you need to take some time off work. (= I believe, in my opinion)

I **see** that you are very stressed these days. (= my observation)

She is very fair with her employees. (= her general character)

ACTIONS

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

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

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



DIALOGUE A: What do you do?

B: I'm a sales manager. 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.

2

Practice 1

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

1. I often _____ (go) to work by bus.
2. Where _____ (you/live)?
3. The boss isn't here. She _____ (have) lunch with a client.
4. The photocopy machine is free. I _____ (not/use) it.
5. Tom _____ (work) as an architect for a large firm in London. This month, his company _____ (design) a new office building for one of its main clients.
6. I usually _____ (leave) the office at 5pm, but this week I _____ (stay) late because of the new project.
7. Pablo is a journalist - he _____ (write) articles for a well-known newspaper. Right now, he _____ (write) about the economic situation in his country.
8. Owen _____ (talk) on the phone at the moment. He _____ (not/usually/make) calls in his work.

3

Practice 2

Look at the pictures below. On the next page, answer the questions about each picture using the phrases below, like in the example.

buy and sell shares
draft agreements
make a deal
sell insurance

buy supplies
drink wine
repair cars
text people

design buildings
have lunch
run a corporation
work late

develop websites
kick a photocopier
go to a client
write a note



salesman



architects



CEO



purchasing managers



business lawyers



stock brokers



IT programmer



mechanic



1. What does he do? He sells insurance.
What is he doing? He's going to a client.
2. What do they do?
What are they doing?
3. What does he do?
What is he doing?
4. What do they do?
What are they doing?
5. What do they do?
What are they doing?
6. What do they do?
What are they doing?
7. What does he do?
What is he doing?
8. What does he do?
What is he doing?

Now answer the questions about you:

1. What do you do?
2. What are you doing?

4

Practice 3 - State vs. Action verbs

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

1. We _____ (need) to wait. I _____ (not/know) how long.
2. I _____ (not/like) this design. I _____ (prefer) that one.
3. I _____ (not/understand) what you _____ (try) to say. Can you explain it another way?
4. Jenny _____ (be) on maternity leave. She _____ (not/work) at the moment.
5. The managers _____ (think) of relocating the company headquarters.
6. Right now, I _____ (not/see) a problem. I _____ (think) everything is fine.
7. _____ (have/you) a minute? I _____ (want) to talk to you about something.
8. I _____ (see) that you _____ (not/do) anything at the moment.
9. The internet _____ (seem) to be down at the moment. _____ (you/understand)?
10. I _____ (not/have) time to talk right now. I _____ (see) the manager.



5 Practice 4

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

1. You / often / wear / jeans at work?
2. You / wear / jeans / right now?
3. It / often / rain / in your country?
4. It / rain / at the moment?
5. You / ever / work late?
6. You / work late / today?
7. You / sometimes / think / about changing your career?
8. You / think / about changing your career / at the moment?
9. You / work on / an important project / this week?
10. You / often / work on / important projects?
11. You / commute / by train?
12. You / commute / right now?

6

Present continuous with 'always'

We often use the **present continuous** with **always** to talk about something that happens again and again. The meaning is like the present simple, but it usually describes a habit that is irritating.

She's **always** talking about people behind their backs.

He's **always** arriving late.

I'm **always** losing my keys!

We can also use the **present continuous** with **always** to emphasise other repeated actions and behaviour.

We're **always** looking for new employees. (= We often look for new employees)

I'm **always** reading something. (= I read very often)

Joe is a very generous person. He's **always** lending his friends money. (= he lends money to his friends very often)



7

Practice 5

Complete the sentences below with a suitable verb and 'always', like in the example.

arrive
make

chat
misunderstand

criticise
rain

drink
reply

eat
forget

1. Peter is always forgetting to do important tasks. It's a real problem.
2. Anna _____ to her friends on Skype. When does she have time for work?
3. Jeff is a very mean boss. He _____ his employees.
4. You'll need an umbrella. It _____ in London.
5. Simon _____ to the wrong emails.
6. You _____ what I say. Try to listen more carefully.
7. The marketing manager _____ strong black coffee. By the end of the day, he becomes very irritable.
8. Joe _____ too much at lunchtime. It's not surprising that he feels sleepy in the afternoon.
9. You _____ late! Try to be on time.
10. The secretary _____ the same mistakes! It's so irritating.

Do you have any bad or irritating habits?