Unit 4

Present continuous and present simple 2 (**I am doing** and **I do**)

A

We use continuous forms (I**'m waiting**, it**'s raining** etc.) for actions and happenings that have started but not finished.
Some verbs (for example, **know** and **like**) are not normally used in this way. We don't say 'I am knowing', 'they are liking'. We say 'I **know**', 'they **like**'.

The following verbs are not normally used in the present continuous:

like	**want**	**need**	**prefer**	
know	**realise**	**understand**	**recognise**	
believe	**suppose**	**remember**	**mean**	
belong	**fit**	**contain**	**consist**	**seem**

- I'm hungry. I **want** something to eat. (*not* I'm wanting)
- **Do** you **understand** what I **mean**?
- Anna **doesn't seem** very happy right now.

B

think

When **think** means 'believe' or 'have an opinion', we do not use the continuous:

- I **think** Mary is Canadian, but I'm not sure. (*not* I'm thinking)
- What **do** you **think** of my idea? (= what is your opinion?)

When **think** means 'consider', the continuous is possible:

- I'**m thinking** about what happened. I often **think** about it.
- Nicky **is thinking** of giving up her job. (= she is considering it)

C

see **hear** **smell** **taste** **look** **feel**

We normally use the present simple (not continuous) with **see**/**hear**/**smell**/**taste**:

- **Do** you **see** that man over there? (*not* are you seeing)
- The room **smells**. Let's open a window.
- This soup **doesn't taste** very good.

You can use the present simple or continuous to say how somebody **looks** or **feels** now:

- You **look** well today. *or* You'**re looking** well today.
- How **do** you **feel** now? *or* How **are** you **feeling** now?

but

- I usually **feel** tired in the morning. (*not* I'm usually feeling)

D

am/**is**/**are being**

You can say **he's being** ..., **you're being** ... etc. to say how somebody is behaving *now*:

- I can't understand why he**'s being** so selfish. He isn't usually like that.
  (**being** selfish = behaving selfishly now)
- 'The path is icy. Don't slip.' 'Don't worry. I**'m being** very careful.'

Compare:

- He never thinks about other people. He**'s** very selfish.
  (= he is selfish generally, not only now)
- I don't like to take risks. I**'m** a very careful person.

We use **am**/**is**/**are being** to say how a person is *behaving* (= doing something they can control) now.
It is not usually possible in other situations:

- Sam **is** ill. (*not* is being ill)
- **Are** you tired? (*not* are you being tired)

Present continuous and simple 1 → **Unit 3** **have** → **Unit 17** Present tenses for the future → **Unit 19**

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Exercises

4.1 Put the verb into the correct form, present continuous or present simple.

1 Are you hungry? Do you want (you / want) something to eat?
2 Alan says he's 90 years old, but nobody ..... (believe) him.
3 She told me her name, but ..... (I / not / remember) it now.
4 Don't put the dictionary away. ..... (I / use) it.
5 Don't put the dictionary away. ..... (I / need) it.
6 Air ..... (consist) mainly of nitrogen and oxygen.
7 Who is that man? What ..... (he / want)?
8 Who is that man? Why ..... (he / look) at us?
9 Who is that man? ..... (you / recognise) him?
10 ..... (I / think) of selling my car. Would you be interested in buying it?
11 I can't make up my mind. What ..... (you / think) I should do?
12 Gary wasn't well earlier, but ..... (he / seem) OK now.

4.2 Use the words in brackets to make sentences.

4.3 Are the underlined verbs OK? Correct them where necessary.

1 Nicky is thinking of giving up her job. OK
2 It's not true. I'm not believing it. I don't believe it.
3 I'm feeling hungry. Is there anything to eat? .....
4 I've never eaten that fruit. What is it tasting like? .....
5 I'm not sure what she does. I think she works in a shop. .....
6 Look over there. What are you seeing? .....
7 You're very quiet. What are you thinking about? .....

4.4 Complete the sentences. Use is/are being (continuous) or is/are (simple).

1 I can't understand why he's being so selfish. He isn't usually like that.
2 You'll like Sophie when you meet her. She ..... very nice.
3 Sarah ..... very nice to me at the moment. I wonder why.
4 They ..... very happy. They've just got married.
5 You're normally very patient, so why ..... so unreasonable about waiting ten more minutes?
6 Would you like something to eat? ..... hungry?

LIVEWORKSHEETS