Grammar: Present Simple vs. Present Continuous

Name: _____ Date: _____

UNIT 1

A The present (1)

present simple • present continuous

1 Read the following descriptions of the different ways that present tenses can be used.

present simple

1 We use the present simple to talk about general facts that are true and will be true for some time:
*She **lives** in London.*
*The earth **travels** around the sun.*

2 We use the present simple to talk about repeated actions or habits:
*He **gets up** at six-thirty every morning.*
*I always **cry** during romantic films.*

3 The present simple is often used to tell the stories of movies and plays, and in sports commentaries:
*So then he **makes** his way back to Rome and becomes a gladiator.*
*Beckham **passes** the ball to Ronaldo. Ronaldo scores!*

4 Some verbs usually take the present simple rather than the present continuous, whatever the context:
- mental states: ***believe, know, realize, recognize, suppose, think, understand***
- wants and likes: ***want, like, love, hate, need, prefer***
- appearance: ***appear, seem, look like***

*I **know** her very well.* (NOT: ~~*I am knowing her very well.*~~)
*Olivia **seems** rather tired today.* (NOT: ~~*Olivia is seeming rather tired.*~~)

5 The present simple is used to talk about future schedules and arrangements:
*The bus **leaves** at ten o'clock.*
*Her exam **finishes** at two o'clock.*

present continuous

6 We use the present continuous to talk about things that have begun and are not yet finished at the time of speaking:
*They're **staying** with friends in the country this week.*
*She's **watching** the news on television.*

7 We use the present continuous to talk about changes in people and the world around us:
*House prices **are rising**.*
*Keith **is getting** taller every day.*

8 The present continuous is sometimes used with ***always*** to describe repeated actions that occur more often than is expected. This is used in speaking more often than writing.
*He's **always forgetting** his key.*
*She's **always complaining** about something.*

9 We use the present continuous to talk about things in the future that have been planned:
*I'm **travelling** to Boston next week.*
*She's **playing** in a concert tomorrow evening.*

Remember: there are certain verbs that do not usually appear in the continuous forms (see 4 opposite).

LIVEWORKSHEETS

2 Choose the correct form (present simple or present continuous) of the verb in brackets and fill the gaps.

Marek, an artist, (a live) ..... in London. He (b get up) ..... at about six o'clock every morning and (c drive) ..... to work. He (d work) ..... in a big room because he needs lots of space. At work he (e wear) ..... old clothes and big gloves. At the moment he (f work) ..... on a new sculpture for a main square in the city. He (g make) ..... his sculpture from wood. When he (h leave) ..... work in the evening, he (i drive) ..... back home. He has dinner with his family and then he (j read) ..... to his children before they go to sleep. At the moment they (k read) ..... a book about a wizard called Harry Potter. When the children are asleep he (l watch) ..... television with his wife. When he (m go) ..... to sleep he (n dream) ..... of wood and metal—and all the sculptures he is going to make one day.

3 Choose the correct alternative (in blue) in the following sentences. Say which explanation from Exercise 1 fits the verb form you have chosen. The first answer is done for you.



a ~~We are knowing~~/We know that you did it !

explanation 4



b Oh, this is dramatic! Peters is running/runs up the side of the court, is getting/gets past Semidt and is putting/puts the ball in the basket.



c Hello. What? ... I'm on the train ... we just leave/are just leaving.



d Oh, stop it! You're always telling/You always tell me to tidy my room and it's not fair!



e There's no doubt about it. The weather gets/is getting warmer all the time. Global warming is a reality.



f When Oscar leaves/is leaving Sidney, he is giving/gives a note to Lucinda. He tells/is telling her not to open it unless he doesn't return.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

B The present (2)

questions and negatives

1 Read the following explanations of how to make questions and negatives with present tense verbs.

present tense questions and negatives

1 We make questions by changing the order of the *subject* and the *auxiliary verb*:
STATEMENT: *Anya is **studying** English.*
QUESTIONS: *Is Anya **studying** English?*
*Why is Anya **studying** English?*
*What is Anya **studying**?*

2 If the verb does not have an auxiliary (in the statement) we use ***do*** before the subject to make questions:
STATEMENT: *Kevin **lives** in Sydney.*
QUESTIONS: *Does Kevin **live** in Sydney?*
*Why **does Kevin** live in Sydney?*
*Where **does Kevin** live?*

3 When we answer a question we often use the *short form* with the auxiliary ***do/does*** or ***don't/doesn't***:
*"**Do** the girls **like** the new house?" "Yes, they **do**."*
*"**Does** John **live** in Chicago?" "No, he **doesn't**."*
If the question uses the auxiliary ***be***, we repeat the auxiliary in the answer:
*"**Is** Jenny a trainee?" "No, she **isn't**."*
*"**Are** we very busy today?" "Yes, we **are**."*

4 We make negative sentences by putting ***not*** after the auxiliary verb or after ***do***:
STATEMENT: *Anya **is studying** English.*
*Kevin **lives** in Sydney.*
NEGATIVE: *Anya **is not (isn't)** studying English.*
*Kevin **does not (doesn't)** live in Sydney.*

2 Rearrange the words to make questions about Marek, the sculptor (see Exercise 2 in Section A). The first one is done for you. Don't forget the question mark.

a does/live/Marek/where
Where does Marek live?

b does/every morning/get up/he/when
.....

c does/get/he/how/to work
.....

d at the moment/he/is/working on/what
.....

e for this sculpture/he/is/using/why/wood
.....

f at work/does/he/wear/what
.....

g does/have/he/supper/where
.....

h are/book/they/reading/what
.....

i does/he/watch television/who/with
.....

j about/at this moment/dreaming/he/is/what
.....

LIVEWORKSHEETS

3 Look back at Exercise 2 in Section A. Are the following statements *True* (T) or *False* (F)? If they are *False*, correct them. The first one is done for you.

a He gets up at eight o'clock every morning.
F – He doesn't. He gets up at about six o'clock.

b Marek lives in London.

c He goes to work by bus.

d He wears a suit and tie to work.

e He is making a wooden sculpture.

f He is working in his studio today.

g He has dinner by himself.

h He is reading *Mary Poppins* to his children.

i He and his wife listen to the radio every evening.

j He dreams of all the sculptures he is going to make one day.

4 Make questions and replies about the following information, using the present simple or present continuous. In the replies use a pronoun to replace the name or noun in the question. (✓ = reply with Yes; ✗ = reply with No.)

a Paul/like/jogging. ✓
Does Paul like jogging?
Yes, he does.

b swimming/be/good for you ✓

c the girls' team/training/this afternoon ✗

d the tennis tournament/be/in July ✓

e the sports coaches/work/in the summer ✗

f sportsmen and sportswomen/need/lots of sleep ✓

g rowing a boat/be/good exercise ✓

h people/need/lots of protein ✗

i Paul/change/his shoes/at the moment ✓

j Jenny/need/new running shoes ✓

k the gym/be/open on Sundays ✗

l Jenny/run/round the track now ✗

m Olive/want/a sauna after the race ✓

n the team/compete/in this tournament ✗

LIVEWORKSHEETS

C Mixed practice

present simple • present continuous

1 Choose the correct form of the verb in brackets and fill the gaps.

Kim is in her senior year for liberal arts degree at Columbia University. Her final exams (a be) ..... next week so there are no classes. Like all the other Seniors this week she (b review) ..... her work. But Kim (c not study) ..... very hard right now. She (d sit) ..... in the yard at her house (e read) ..... her notes. It is a beautiful day. Birds (f sing) ..... in the trees. She (g sit/not/usually) ..... in the yard like this when classes are on. Normally she (h take) ..... the bus to the university at eight o'clock and (i study) ..... all day. She (j have) ..... lunch at about one with her friends, usually Alice and Gemma. But today Alice (k visit) ..... her grandmother and Gemma (l take) ..... part in an athletics event. Still, Kim's brother is home from his job as an intern in Connecticut. She can hear him now. He (m talk) ..... to his girlfriend on the telephone. The sun (n get) ..... hotter. Maybe reviewing is not such a good idea. Perhaps she should call Alice and they could go for a swim.

2 Write the most appropriate form of the verbs (in brackets) in the gaps.
Jacky Beadle is talking on the telephone about the man she works for.



a Yes, Malcolm Clarke ...is... on the staff here. (be)

b I'm sorry Mr. Clarke isn't here. He ..... a conference in Warsaw. (attend)

c He usually ..... in his office from nine till three. (work)

d Yes, Mr. Clarke ..... to quite a lot of conferences. (go)

e At the conference in Warsaw, they ..... global warming. (discuss)

f Yes, Mr. Clarke ..... global warming is a problem. Why? Because it ..... warmer all the time. (believe; get)

g He ..... here for about six months of the year, and the rest of the time he ..... around the world. (live; travel)

h He usually ..... by plane. (go)

i He ..... at the Meridien hotel in Warsaw. (stay)

j I don't know, but I hope that he ..... a good time. (have)

k No, I'm sorry. I ..... questions like that. We ..... people's phone numbers or addresses. (not/answer; not/give)

LIVEWORKSHEETS

3 Use the following prompts to make some of the caller's questions (from the previous exercise) about Mr Clarke. The first one is done for you.



a Malcolm Clarke—on the staff there?
Is Malcolm Clarke on the staff there?

b at work—when?

c discussing in Warsaw—what?

d Mr. Clarke—believe—global warming is a problem?

e he—global warming is a problem—why?

f Mr. Clarke—travel a lot?

g he travel—how?

h staying in Warsaw—where?

i Mr. Clarke—have a good time?

4 Jacky is having coffee with her sister Sarah. She is talking about her boss (Mr. Clarke). Write the verbs from the box in the correct gaps, using the appropriate present tense (the first one is done for you).

not be	live
not drive	make
not enjoy	realize
feel	seem
get	speak
go	take
grow	take part
have	travel
leave (x2)	visit
like (x3)	

'He (a) lives in San Francisco with his wife (a doctor), two children, a dog, and a cat. He (b) ..... a taxi to work every day because he (c) .....; he (d) ..... it, you see.

He (e) ..... a lot. He (f) ..... all our overseas offices. At the moment he (g) ..... in a conference in Warsaw. He (h) ..... about pollution and the environment.

Everybody really (i) ..... Malcolm, but he is a bit forgetful. He (j) ..... his things on trains or in taxis. When he (k) ..... that he's left some papers or his briefcase in some car or on some train he (l) ..... crazy and we (m) ..... to start phoning all over San Francisco—well, all over the world, sometimes—to try and find his things. But he (n) ..... stupid. He just (o) ..... to be. Actually he's pretty smart.

The reason why everybody (p) ..... Malcolm? Well, you see, the company (q) ..... all the time. We're (r) ..... big plans for the future, and everybody (s) ..... very optimistic. We know that's because of Malcolm. He often (t) ..... brilliant ideas and everybody (u) ..... him a lot—I've said that already, haven't I!

That's why we're all a bit sad. He (v) ..... the company in two weeks. He's going to travel around the world and write a novel. Sounds OK to me.

LIVEWORKSHEETS