

PRESENT SIMPLE VS PRESENT CONTINUOUS/ STATIVE VERBS



John walks home from school every day.



The Earth moves around the Sun.



Their train arrives in fifteen minutes.



They are sitting at a café having a good time.



They're leaving for their honeymoon later.



Nina is always biting her nails.

| Present Simple | Form: main verb (+s in the third person singular) | | |
|----------------|---|------------------------|------------------------|
| Affirmative | I run, He/She/It runs, We/You/They run | | |
| Negative | I don't run, He/She/It doesn't run, We/You/They don't run | | |
| Interrogative | Do I run? Does he/she/it run? Do we/you/they run? | | |
| Short Answers | Yes, I do. | Yes, he/she/it does. | Yes, we/you/they do. |
| | No, I don't. | No, he/she/it doesn't. | No, we/you/they don't. |

Use

We use the present simple for:

- permanent states.
Pam lives in a one-bedroom flat in Bristol.
- habits and routines (with **always**, **usually**, etc.).
Mike always knocks before entering a room.
- timetables and programmes (future reference).
The concert begins at 9 o'clock.
- general truths and laws of nature.
Water boils at 100°C.
- sporting commentaries, reviews and narrations.
Seth Rogen successfully plays the role of Britt Reid in the "Green Hornet".

The time expressions we use with the present simple are: *usually, often, always, every day/week/month/year, etc., in the morning/afternoon/evening, at night/ the weekend, on Fridays, etc.*

Stative Verbs

Stative verbs are verbs which describe a state rather than an action, and so do not usually have a continuous tense. These verbs are:

- verbs of the senses (see, hear, smell, taste, feel, look, sound, seem, appear, etc.).
Greg sounds happy whenever he speaks to Kim.
- verbs of perception (know, believe, understand, realise, remember, forget, etc.). *Do you realise how late it is?*
- verbs which express feelings and emotions (like, love, hate, enjoy, prefer, detest, desire, want, etc.).
Mark really hates seafood.
- some other verbs (agree, be, belong, contain, continue, cost, fit, have, include, keep, matter, need, owe, own, possess, require, suppose, weigh, wish, etc.). *The baby weighs 3 kilos.*

Present Continuous Form: to be + main verb + -ing

| | | | |
|---------------|---|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Affirmative | I'm moving, He's/She's/It's moving, We're/You're/They're moving | | |
| Negative | I'm not moving, He/She/It isn't moving, We/You/They aren't moving | | |
| Interrogative | Am I moving? Is he/she/it moving? Are we/you/they moving? | | |
| Short Answers | Yes, I am. | Yes, he/she/it is. | Yes, we/you/they are. |
| | No, I'm not. | No, he/she/it isn't. | No, we/you/they aren't. |

Use

We use the present continuous:

- for temporary actions or situations.
John is painting his flat these days.
- for actions taking place at or around the moment of speaking. *He's studying in his room right now.*
- for fixed arrangements in the near future.
We are going on a cruise next week.
- for currently changing and developing situations.
More and more people are eating healthily these days.
- with adverbs such as **always** to express anger or irritation at a repeated action. *Stop that! You are always tapping your pencil on the desk.*

The time expressions we use with the present continuous are: *now, this week/month, etc., at the moment, at present, these days, nowadays, still, today, tonight, etc.*

Some of these verbs can be used in continuous tenses, but with a difference in meaning.

| | Present Simple | Present Continuous |
|--------|--|--|
| THINK | <i>I think I'm coming down with the flu.</i> (= believe) | <i>David is thinking of travelling across Europe.</i> (= is considering) |
| HAVE | <i>Mark has a brand new car.</i> (= owns, possesses) | <i>They are having fun skateboarding.</i> (= are experiencing) <i>He is having a shower.</i> (= is taking) <i>I am having a tuna sandwich.</i> (= am eating) |
| SEE | <i>I can see that you're really busy.</i> (= it is visible) <i>Do you see what I'm saying?</i> (= understand) | <i>I'm seeing Jen at the Trafford Centre this afternoon.</i> (= am meeting) |
| TASTE | <i>The medicine tastes very bitter.</i> (= it is, has the flavour of) | <i>The chef is tasting the beef stew.</i> (= is trying) |
| SMELL | <i>This perfume smells great.</i> (= has the aroma of) | <i>Why are you smelling the cheese?</i> (= are sniffing) |
| APPEAR | <i>Laura appears to be disappointed.</i> (= seems) | <i>The band is appearing on stage this week.</i> (= is performing) |
| FIT | <i>These trousers fit perfectly.</i> (= are the right size) | <i>The carpenter is fitting cabinets in the kitchen.</i> (= is attaching) |
| LOOK | <i>The couple looks so happy.</i> (= appears to be) | <i>Tom is looking at the help-wanted ads in the paper.</i> (= is taking a look at) |

- The verb **enjoy** can be used in continuous tenses to express a specific preference.
Thomas enjoys listening to jazz music. (general preference) BUT *He's really enjoying the live concert.* (specific preference)
- **Feel** (experience a particular emotion), and **hurt** can be used in simple or continuous tenses with no difference in meaning.
I feel good. = *I am feeling good.* *My back hurts.* = *My back is hurting.*
- **Listen, look and watch**, express deliberate actions and can be used in continuous tenses.
They are watching a documentary on Discovery Channel.

1 Identify the tenses, and then match them to the correct description.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> h | Kate is working at her uncle's restaurant this summer. | a a sporting commentary |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | More and more species are becoming endangered. | b a fixed arrangement in the near future |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | The next bus to Glasgow leaves at 9:00. | c a general truth or law of nature |
| 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | Davies catches the ball with an amazing dive. | d a timetable in the future |
| 5 <input type="checkbox"/> | They are running in the marathon tomorrow. | e a changing or developing situation |
| 6 <input type="checkbox"/> | Fred lives with his parents. | f a habit or routine |
| 7 <input type="checkbox"/> | Helen bites her nails when she's nervous. | g a fact or permanent state |
| 8 <input type="checkbox"/> | Oceans cover about 70% of the Earth's surface. | h a temporary situation |

2 Underline the correct time expression.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Will and his friends are going to an Aerosmith concert this evening/every evening. | 6 Is Geoffrey every day/still looking for a new flat? |
| 2 Frank is sending out the party invitations at the moment/on Mondays. | 7 Why are you always/usually taking my things without asking first? It makes me so angry! |
| 3 Rachel and her parents are watching the fireworks display now/at weekends. | 8 Mr Samuels is a security guard and works tonight/at night. |
| 4 Christina does her grocery shopping this Friday/on Fridays. | 9 Ian is working hard on a project every week/these days; that's why he doesn't have time to come out with us. |
| 5 Are you and Ben doing anything interesting today/every day? | 10 The Andersons take holidays in different places around the world this year/every year. |

3 Underline the correct verb form.

- 1 Eric doesn't drink/isn't drinking coffee in the mornings.
- 2 Is Sarah coming/Does Sarah come to the bowling alley with us tonight?
- 3 Now that spring is here, the weather gets/is getting warmer every day.
- 4 Mr Adams teaches/is teaching geography at the local high school.
- 5 I really hate the way John always interrupts/is always interrupting me when I'm in the middle of a sentence!
- 6 What is showing/shows at the cinema this weekend?
- 7 Rogers successfully manages/is managing to catch the ball, saving his team from another goal.
- 8 Hurry up! The play is starting/starts in half an hour and we're still here.
- 9 Polar bears live/are living in the region around the North Pole.
- 10 Why do you throw/are you throwing away your sandwich? Is there something wrong with it?

4 Put the verbs in brackets into the present simple or the present continuous.

- 1 Anna is in her room and *is studying* (study) hard for next week's exams.
- 2 (you/do) anything special for your birthday tomorrow?
- 3 Linda's plane (land) at 4:00, so there's plenty of time for us to go and pick her up.
- 4 Ethan (drive) a taxi for a living.
- 5 More and more people (chase) to do their shopping online these days.
- 6 Some birds (fly) to warmer climates in winter.
- 7 Mark (jog) twice around the block every morning.
- 8 Franco's restaurant (not/serve) very interesting dishes, but its prices are reasonable.
- 9 Since I (not/work) this weekend, let's take a short trip to the countryside.
- 10 Where (Beata/come) from? Is she Swedish?

5 Put the verbs in brackets into the correct present form.

- 1 A: How often *does this bus run* (this bus/run)?
B: Every thirty minutes. The next bus
..... (pass) at six thirty.
- 2 A: (you/have) any plans for the winter holidays?
B: Yes, we (fly) to Switzerland.
- 3 A: It says here that light
(travel) faster than sound.
B: Everyone (know) that!
- 4 A: What (Susan/do)?
B: She (write) a short story for English class.
- 5 A: (your parents/drive) you to school every morning?
B: No, I (take) the train.
- 6 A: (Bill/go) to the same school as you?
B: Yes, he is in my class. But he
(not/sit) next to me.

6 Choose the correct form of the verbs to complete the email.

Hi Judy,
How are you? We 1) *are having* (have) a spectacular time here in the USA. Nothing 2) (beat) New Orleans for Mardi Gras!
Today is the last day of the carnival and the locals 3) (hold) parades with huge colourful floats.
Right now, we 4)
(stand) on our balcony watching all the fun.
Street performers 5) (wear) their marvellous costumes and the crowds 6)
(cheer). Jane 7) (take part) in the festivities, too. She 8) (enjoy) carnivals and festivals more than anything else!
Well, I have to go now. See you when we get back.
Bob

