

a Present Simple vs Present Progressive / Present Continuous

Present Simple

Affirmative	Questions
I work He works	Do you work? Does she work?
Negative	
It does not (doesn't) work They do not (don't) work	

Present Progressive

Affirmative	Questions
I am (I'm) working He is (He's) working	Are you working? Is she working?
Negative	
It is not (isn't) working They are not (aren't) working	

We use the Present Simple:

- for habits or actions that happen regularly in the present.
I usually drink coffee in the morning.
The school bus picks us up at 7:30 every morning.
- for situations that are true in the present.
We live in a flat.
- for general truths.
Bees make honey.
- for actions that take place according to a schedule.
What time does your plane leave tomorrow?
- in story telling, film and book reviews, sports commentaries, instructions.
Peter Roth scores and the fans go wild.

Time Expressions

always, usually, often, occasionally, rarely, never, hardly ever, etc.
every day/week, etc.
once/twice/three times, etc. a day/month, etc.
at the weekend, etc.
on Sundays/Sunday morning, etc.
in the morning, in winter, etc.

We use the Present Progressive:

- for temporary states.
Mark is working at his father's shop this week.
- for actions taking place at the moment of speaking.
He's studying for a test right now.
- for future arrangements (we mention when).
We are going to London next week.
- for annoying habits or repeated actions, with adverbs of frequency such as **always**, **constantly**, etc.
My brother is always telling me what to do!

Time Expressions

now, at present, at the moment, today, these days, this week/year, etc.
tonight, tomorrow, next week/year, etc.

b Stative Verbs

Stative verbs describe states (not actions). We do not usually use stative verbs in continuous tenses.

Stative verbs express states. They are **not** usually used in the Present Progressive.

Stative Verbs usually refer to:

- Verbs of the senses:** feel, hear, smell, taste, see, sound, notice, look (=seem), etc.
- Verbs of emotions and preferences:** love, hate, like, dislike, prefer, want, fear, mind, wish, need, admire, etc.
- Verbs of perception and opinion:** think (=believe), believe, imagine, hope, know, mean, understand, expect, remember, forget, etc.
- Other verbs:** be, have (=possess), cost, belong, appear, weigh, seem, consist, own, etc.

Some **stative verbs** are used in the Present Progressive, but with a different meaning. Some of these are:

see
I see Jack's car in the distance.
think
I think that Sandra Bullock is a good actress.
have
They have a Siamese cat.
taste
This cake tastes delicious!
look
You look worried. Is something wrong?

see (=meet, visit)
I am seeing my dentist tomorrow.
think of/about (=process in one's mind)
She's thinking of buying a new car.
have (=drink, eat, take)
We are having breakfast now.
taste (=try food)
The chef is tasting the food.
look (=see)
What are you looking at?

NOTE: The verbs **listen** and **watch** refer to senses but they are not stative verbs, so they can be used in the Present Progressive.
We're watching a football game right now.

The verbs **see**, **hear**, **smell**, **taste** and **feel** are commonly used with **can** to indicate an action happening now.
I can hear a strange noise coming from the kitchen.

Activities

A. Circle the correct words.

1. Can you please answer the phone? I **have** / **'m having** a shower.
2. Summer **comes** / **is coming** after spring.
3. That woman **looks** / **is looking** at you. I **believe** / **'m believing** she **wants** / **'s wanting** to talk to you.
4. Stevenson **takes** / **is taking** the ball and **passes** / **is passing** it to McFerry.
5. Kevin **doesn't go** / **isn't going** out at all this week. He **studies** / **'s studying** for a test.
6. My mum **drinks** / **is drinking** three cups of coffee a day.
7. Kathy **is meeting** / **meets** Maria tomorrow afternoon.
8. Hurry up! The bus **leaves** / **is leaving**!

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Complete with the Present Simple or the Present Continuous of the verbs in brackets.

1. A: Why are you in such a hurry? What time _____ the train to Brighton _____ (leave)?
 B: At 9 p.m. But I _____ (want) to be at the train station at six o'clock because I _____ (meet) my friend Sally.
2. A: Whose suitcase is this?
 B: It's Timothy's. He _____ (stay) with us for a few days.
 A: Really? Where is he now?
 B: He's outside with Larry. They _____ (wash) the car. Larry _____ (always / wash) the car on Sundays.
3. A: Hey, Mary. Can you explain this text to me? I _____ (not understand) it.
 B: Not now, Kevin. I _____ (work).
 A: Oh Mary. You _____ (never / help) me!
4. A: Why _____ the children _____ (cry)?
 B: Because they can't find their cat. They _____ (think) someone took it.
 A: Their cat is outside. It _____ (sleep) next to the garage.