

## present simple and continuous, action and non-action verbs

present simple: *I live, he works, etc.*

1 I work in a bank. She **studies** Russian. (10))  
We **don't have** any pets. Jack **doesn't wear** glasses.  
Where **do** you **live**? Does your brother **have** a car?  
2 She usually **has** cereal for breakfast.  
I'm never late for work.  
We only **eat out** about once a month.

1 We use the present simple for things that are always true or happen regularly.  
• Remember the spelling rules for third person singular, e.g. *lives, studies, watches*.  
• Use ASI (Auxiliary, Subject, Infinitive) or QUASI (Question word, Auxiliary, Subject, Infinitive) to help you with word order in questions. *Do you know David? What time does the film start?*

2 We often use the present simple with adverbs of frequency, e.g. *usually, never*, or expressions of frequency, e.g. *every day, once a week*.  
• Adverbs of frequency go **before** the main verb, and **after** *be*.  
• Expressions of frequency usually go at the end of the sentence or verb phrase.

present continuous: *be + verb + -ing*

A Who **are** you **waiting** for? (11))  
B I'm **waiting** for a friend.  
A Is your sister still **going out** with Adam?  
B No, they broke up. She **isn't going out** with anyone at the moment.

a Complete the sentences with the present simple or present continuous forms of the verbs in brackets.

We **don't go** to Chinese restaurants very often. (not go)  
1 These days, most children **\_\_\_\_\_** too many fizzy drinks. (have)  
2 **\_\_\_\_\_** you **\_\_\_\_\_** any vitamins at the moment? (take)  
3 Don't eat that spinach if you **\_\_\_\_\_** it. (not like)  
4 **\_\_\_\_\_** your boyfriend **\_\_\_\_\_** how to cook fish? (know)  
5 We **\_\_\_\_\_** takeaway pizzas during the week. (not get)  
6 What **\_\_\_\_\_** your mother **\_\_\_\_\_**? It smells great! (make)  
7 You look sad. What **\_\_\_\_\_** you **\_\_\_\_\_** about? (think)  
8 The diet in my country **\_\_\_\_\_** worse. (get)  
9 How often **\_\_\_\_\_** you **\_\_\_\_\_** seafood? (eat)  
10 I **\_\_\_\_\_** usually **\_\_\_\_\_** fish. (not cook)

- We use the present continuous (not the present simple) for actions in progress at the time of speaking, e.g. things that are happening now or around now. These are normally temporary, not habitual actions.
- Remember the spelling rules, e.g. *living, studying, getting*.
- We also use the present continuous for future arrangements (see 1B)).

action and non-action verbs

A What **are** you **cooking**? (12))

B I'm **making** pasta.  
A Great! I **love** pasta.  
A What **are** you **looking** for?  
B My car keys.  
A I'll help you in a moment.  
B But I **need** them now!

- Verbs which describe **actions**, e.g. *cook, make*, can be used in the present simple or continuous. *I'm making the lunch. I usually make the lunch at the weekend.*
- Verbs which describe **states or feelings** (not actions), e.g. *love, need, be*, are **non-action verbs**. They are not usually used in the present continuous, even if we mean 'now'.
- Common non-action verbs are *agree, be, believe, belong, depend, forget, hate, hear, know, like, love, matter, mean, need, prefer, realize, recognize, remember, seem, suppose*.

### Verbs that can be both action and non-action

A few verbs have an action and a non-action meaning, e.g. *have and think*.  
*I have a cat now.* = possession (non-action)  
*I can't talk now. I'm having lunch.* = an action  
*I think this music's great.* = opinion (non-action)  
*What are you thinking about?* = an action

b Circle the correct form, present simple or continuous.

I don't believe / I'm not believing that you cooked this meal yourself.

- 1 Come on, let's order. The waiter **comes** / **is coming**.
- 2 Kate **doesn't want** / **isn't wanting** to have dinner now. She **isn't hungry**.
- 3 The head chef is ill, so he **doesn't work** / **isn't working** today.
- 4 The bill **seems** / **is seeming** very high to me.
- 5 We've had an argument, so we **don't speak** / **aren't speaking** to each other at the moment.
- 6 My mum **thinks** / **is thinking** my diet is awful these days.
- 7 **Do we need** / **Are we needing** to go shopping today?
- 8 Can I call you back? **I have** / **I'm having** lunch right now.
- 9 I didn't use to like oily fish, but now **I love** / **I'm loving** it!
- 10 What **do you cook** / **are you cooking**? It smells delicious!

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## What's the difference?

Present Simple	Present Continuous
Things which are always true: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water boils at 100 degrees.</li> </ul>	Things which are happening at the moment of speaking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The water is <b>boiling</b> now, so you can put in the pasta.</li> </ul>
Permanent situations (or nearly permanent; true for a few years at least): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Julie <b>lives</b> in London.</li> </ul>	Temporary situations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Julie is <b>living</b> in Paris for a few months (usually she lives in London).</li> </ul> Situations which are slowly changing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I'm <b>getting</b> better and better at speaking English.</li> </ul>
Habits or things we do regularly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I <b>drink</b> coffee every morning.</li> </ul>	Temporary or new habits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I'm <b>drinking</b> too much coffee these days because I'm so busy at work.</li> </ul> Annoying habits (usually with 'always'): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My flatmate is <b>always</b> leaving the kitchen in a mess!</li> </ul>
Future events which are part of a timetable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My plane <b>leaves</b> at eight tonight.</li> </ul> To talk about the future after certain words ('when' 'until' 'after' 'before' 'as soon as'): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I'll call you <b>when I get home</b>.</li> </ul>	Definite future plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I'm <b>meeting</b> John after class today.</li> </ul>
To talk about what happens in books, plays and films: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the end of <b>the book</b>, the detective <b>catches</b> the killer.</li> </ul>	To talk about people in pictures and photos: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In this photo, my mother is <b>walking</b> beside a lake.</li> </ul>

### Remember:

We use the present simple with stative verbs. We can't use any continuous tense (including the present continuous tense, of course) with stative verbs.

Choose the present simple or present continuous.

1. (You / come) \_\_\_\_\_ tonight?

2. (He / eat) \_\_\_\_\_ rice every day?

3. I (work) \_\_\_\_\_ at the moment.

4. (He / come) \_\_\_\_\_ to London often?

5. He (play) \_\_\_\_\_ tennis now.

6. (You / come) \_\_\_\_\_ to the cinema later?

7. They (not / come) \_\_\_\_\_ to the party tomorrow.

8. He (not / play) \_\_\_\_\_ golf now.

9. (You / play) \_\_\_\_\_ tennis this Sunday?

10. They (go) \_\_\_\_\_ to a restaurant every Saturday.

11. She (not / go) \_\_\_\_\_ to the cinema very often.

12. You usually (arrive) \_\_\_\_\_ late.

13. He normally (eat) \_\_\_\_\_ dinner at home.

14. (You / study) \_\_\_\_\_ every night?

15. (They / work) \_\_\_\_\_ late usually?

16. You (not / go) \_\_\_\_\_ out later.

17. I (not / work) \_\_\_\_\_ tonight.

18. (She / work) \_\_\_\_\_ at the moment?

19. I (not / drink) \_\_\_\_\_ coffee very often.

20. Julie (sleep) \_\_\_\_\_ now.