1 Present simple

+	verb / verb + -s	*She **works** in London.*
–	*do/does not* + verb	*He **doesn't work** in London.*
?	*do/does* ... + verb?	*Where **do** you **work**?*

We use the present simple:

- to say when things happen if they take place regularly:
  *They **eat** lunch **at two o'clock**.*
- to talk about permanent situations:
  *I **work** in London.*
- to state general truths:
  *Those bags **sell** really fast.*
  *The moon **goes** round the earth.*
- to talk about habits and how often they happen:
  *You **buy** new clothes **every Saturday**.*
- to describe the plots of books and films:
  *The story **begins** and **ends** in Spain. The year **is** 1937.*

2 Present continuous

+	*am/is/are* + verb + *-ing*	*He's **working** in London this week.*
–	*am/is/are not* + verb + *-ing*	*I'm **not working** in London this week.*
?	*am/is/are* ... + verb + *-ing*?	***Are** you **working** in London this week?*

We use the present continuous:

- to talk about the present moment:
  *I'm **wearing** a pair of old jeans.*
  *I'm **looking** at a blue bag right now.*
- to suggest that an action is temporary, often with words like *now, at the moment, at present* or *just*:
  *They're **eating** lunch at the moment.*
  *I'm **working** in London this week.* (= I don't usually work in London)
- for an action around the time of speaking, which has begun but is not finished:
  *I'm **cleaning** my room.*
  *I'm **looking** round the shops.* (Millie isn't looking round at this moment – she has stopped to talk to Lisa – but she plans to continue looking round later.)
- for changing or developing situations:
  *Navy blue bags **are getting** really fashionable.*
  *The Earth's temperature **is rising**.*
- with a word like *always* or *continually* if we want to criticise or complain:
  *You're **always buying** new clothes!* (= you buy too many)
  *He's **always complaining** about things.*
- with *always* when something unexpected happens several times:
  *I'm **always meeting** my neighbour John near the station. I guess he works somewhere near there.*

3 State verbs

These verbs are nearly always used in a simple rather than a continuous tense. They are mostly about thoughts, feelings, belonging and the senses:

... that leather bag you want to get (**not** ~~*you are wanting to*~~)
You don't deserve to hear it. (**not** ~~*you aren't deserving to*~~)

The following are some important state verbs:

- thoughts: *believe, know, mean, realise, recognise, remember, suppose, understand, feel* (= believe), *think* (= believe):
  *I **think** you're wrong.*
  *We **feel** this decision is right.*
- feelings: *adore, dislike, despise, hate, like, love, want, wish, prefer*:
  *They **despise** me because of the way I'm living.*
- belonging: *belong, have* (= possess), *own, possess*:
  *It **belongs** to my father.*
  *The manager **has** the biggest company car.*

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- senses: *smell, taste, hear, see*:
  *This sauce **tastes** great.*
  *I **hear** what you're saying to me, but I don't agree.*
  *Do you **see** anything you want to buy here?*
  We use *can* with these verbs to show we are talking about this moment:
  *I **can see** you're tired.*
  *I **can hear** someone in the next room.*
- other state verbs: *need, contain, deserve, fit, seem, look* (= seem), *look like, matter, weigh*:
  *This medicine **contains** aspirin.*
  *Mark **weighs** 70 kilos.*

⚠ *Think* is not a state verb when it refers to what someone is doing, not what they believe:
*I'm **thinking** about my holiday.*

⚠ *Have* can be continuous when it does not mean 'possess':
*Steve **is having** a difficult time at college this term.*
*Can I phone you back later? We're **having** lunch right now.*

⚠ *Taste* and *smell* can be continuous when they refer to what someone is doing:
*I'm **tasting** the sauce.*

⚠ *Listen to, watch* and *look at* are not state verbs and can be continuous:
*We're **listening** to music and Diane **is watching** a DVD upstairs.*

⚠ *See* can be continuous when it means 'meet with':
*Lara's at the medical centre. She's **seeing** a doctor about her sore throat.*

⚠ *Weigh* can be continuous when it refers to what someone is doing:
*The shop assistant **is weighing** the cheese.*

4 The verb *to be*

The verb *to be* is nearly always used in a simple rather than a continuous tense. When it is continuous it emphasises that a situation is temporary. It often describes a person's behaviour:
*You're **being** so impatient!* (Millie doesn't believe that Lisa is normally an impatient person.)
*My brother **is being** very nice to me this week. I wonder what he wants!*
*Francis is filling in a form online, so we're all **being** quiet as we don't want him to make any mistakes.*

Fill in the gaps with the present simple or present continuous form of the verbs.

Alex: Why __are you wearing__ (*you / wear*) my coat?

Ben: Oh, I'm sorry. It _____ (*look*) like mine in this light.

Carl: I _____ (*have*) no idea what this sentence _____ (*mean*). Can you translate it?

Donna: No, sorry. I _____ (*not understand*) it either.

Eddie: _____ (*you / see*) those men near the door? They _____ (*look*) at us very strangely.

Fergus: Yes. You're right. _____ (*you / recognise*) them from anywhere?

Eddie: No, but they certainly _____ (*seem*) to know us. They _____ (*come*) across to speak to us.

Gina: What _____ (*you / do*) in the kitchen? Our guests _____ (*wait*) for their dessert, and you _____ (*get*) in my way!

Hamid: I just _____ (*want*) to be somewhere quiet for a while. Everyone _____ (*be*) so noisy this evening! I _____ (*not know*) why – it's very unusual.

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Complete these sentences with the present simple or present continuous form of the verbs.

My father knows (*know*) all about mending cars, but nothing about bicycles.

This pie _____ (*smell*) a bit odd. What's in it?

I _____ (*like*) the jacket of this suit, but unfortunately the trousers _____ (*not fit*) me any more.

You're very quiet this evening. What _____ (*you / think*) about?

Who _____ (*be*) that man? Why _____ (*your sister / be*) so rude to him? She _____ (*have*) such beautiful manners normally.

4 **Complete the email using the present simple or present continuous form of these verbs.**

behave come cost eat enjoy feel ~~go~~ have like love pay realise say seem serve show smile stay take visit

Dear Stephanie,

How are you? We're fine. Our trip round the States **(1)** is going well and we **(2)** _____ ourselves a lot. One good surprise is that things **(3)** _____ less here than back home. For example, this weekend we **(4)** _____ in a motel beside a lake and we **(5)** _____ only $65 per night for a room with a beautiful view.

The only thing we **(6)** _____ (*not*) much is the food. Restaurants **(7)** _____ dinner rather early. We **(8)** _____ (*never*) at six o'clock at home so we **(9)** _____ (*not*) hungry then and American portions **(10)** _____ very big to us. Apart from that, we **(11)** _____ a wonderful time. We **(12)** _____ lots of interesting little towns and we absolutely **(13)** _____ the scenery.

People here **(14)** _____ in a very friendly manner towards strangers. All the shop assistants **(15)** _____ at us, and everyone **(16)** _____ 'Have a nice day!' At home, the TV **(17)** _____ (*always*) us bad news stories about the States, but in fact, when you **(18)** _____ here, you **(19)** _____ it's a really great place. We **(20)** _____ lots of photos to show you.



Much love,

Mick and Mary

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