

Unit

4

Present continuous and present simple 2 (I am doing and I do)

A

We use continuous forms ('I'm waiting, it's raining etc.) for actions and happenings that have started but not finished.

Some verbs (for example, **know** and **like**) are not normally used in this way. We don't say 'I am knowing', 'they are liking'. We say 'I **know**', 'they **like**'.

The following verbs are not normally used in the present continuous:

like	want	need	prefer
know	realise	understand	recognise
believe	suppose	remember	mean
belong	fit	contain	consist
			seem

- I'm hungry. I **want** something to eat. (not I'm wanting)
- Do you understand** what I **mean**?
- Anna **doesn't seem** very happy right now.

B

think

When **think** means 'believe' or 'have an opinion', we do not use the continuous:

- I **think** Mary is Canadian, but I'm not sure. (not I'm thinking)
- What **do you think** of my idea? (= what is your opinion?)

When **think** means 'consider', the continuous is possible:

- I'm **thinking** about what happened. I often **think** about it.
- Nicky **is thinking** of giving up her job. (= she is considering it)

C

see hear smell taste look feel

We normally use the present simple (not continuous) with **see/hear/smell/taste**:

- Do you see** that man over there? (not are you seeing)
- The room **smells**. Let's open a window.
- This soup **doesn't taste** very good.

You can use the present simple or continuous to say how somebody **looks** or **feels** now:

- You **look** well today. or You're **looking** well today.
- How **do you feel** now? or How **are you feeling** now?

but

- I usually **feel** tired in the morning. (not I'm usually feeling)

D

am/is/are being

You can say **he's being** ..., **you're being** ... etc. to say how somebody is behaving now:

- I can't understand why **he's being** so selfish. He isn't usually like that.
(**being** selfish = behaving selfishly now)
- 'The path is icy. Don't slip.' 'Don't worry. I'm **being** very careful.'

Compare:

- He never thinks about other people. He's very selfish.
(= he is selfish generally, not only now)
- I don't like to take risks. I'm a very careful person.

We use **am/is/are being** to say how a person is *behaving* (= doing something they can control) now.

It is not usually possible in other situations:

- Sam **is** ill. (not is being ill)
- Are** you tired? (not are you being tired)

4.1 Put the verb into the correct form, present continuous or present simple.

- Are you hungry? Do you want (you / want) something to eat?
- Alan says he's 90 years old, but nobody (believe) him.
- She told me her name, but (I / not / remember) it now.
- Don't put the dictionary away. (I / use) it.
- Don't put the dictionary away. (I / need) it.
- Air (consist) mainly of nitrogen and oxygen.
- Who is that man? What (he / want)?
- Who is that man? Why (he / look) at us?
- Who is that man? (you / recognise) him?
- (I / think) of selling my car. Would you be interested in buying it?
- I can't make up my mind. What (you / think) I should do?
- Gary wasn't well earlier, but (he / seem) OK now.

4.2 Use the words in brackets to make sentences.

1 (you / not / seem / very happy today)
 You don't seem very happy today.

2 Are you OK?
 You look worried.
 (I / think)

3 (who / this umbrella / belong to?)
 I've no idea.

4 (this / smell / good)

5 Excuse me. (anybody / sit / there?)
 No, it's free.

6 (these gloves / not / fit / me)
 They're too small.

4.3 Are the underlined verbs OK? Correct them where necessary.

- Nicky is thinking of giving up her job.
- It's not true. I'm not believing it.
- I'm feeling hungry. Is there anything to eat?
- I've never eaten that fruit. What is it tasting like?
- I'm not sure what she does. I think she works in a shop.
- Look over there. What are you seeing?
- You're very quiet. What are you thinking about?

OK

I don't believe it.

4.4 Complete the sentences. Use **is/are being** (continuous) or **is/are** (simple).

- I can't understand why he's being so selfish. He isn't usually like that.
- You'll like Sophie when you meet her. She very nice.
- Sarah very nice to me at the moment. I wonder why.
- They very happy. They've just got married.
- You're normally very patient, so why so unreasonable about waiting ten more minutes?
- Would you like something to eat? hungry?