


Present simple (I do)

Study this example situation:



Alex is a bus driver, but now he is in bed asleep. So: He is *not* driving a bus. (He is asleep.)
but He *drives* a bus. (He is a bus driver.)

Drive(s)/work(s)/do(es) etc. is the *present simple*:

I/we/you/they	drive/work/do etc.
he/she/it	drives/works/does etc.

We use the present simple to talk about things in general. We are not thinking only about now. We use it to say that something happens all the time or repeatedly, or that something is true in general. It is not important whether the action is happening at the time of speaking:

- Nurses look after patients in hospitals.
- I usually go away at weekends.
- The earth goes round the sun.

Remember that we say: *he/she/it -s*. Don't forget the s:

- I work... *but* He works... They teach... *but* My sister teaches...

For spelling (-s or -es), see Appendix 6.

We use do/does to make questions and negative sentences:

do	I/we/you/they	work?	I/we/you/they	don't	work
does	he/she/it	come?	he/she/it	doesn't	come
		do?			do

- I come from Canada. Where do you come from?
- 'Would you like a cigarette?' 'No, thanks. I *don't* smoke.'
- What does this word mean? (*not* 'What means this word?')
- Rice *doesn't* grow in cold climates.

In the following examples do is also the main verb:

- 'What do you do?' (= What's your job?) 'I work in a shop.'
- He's so lazy. He *doesn't* do anything to help me. (*not* 'He doesn't anything')

We use the present simple when we say how often we do things:

- I get up at 8 o'clock every morning. (*not* 'I'm getting')
- How often do you go to the dentist? (*not* 'How often are you going?')
- Ann *doesn't* drink tea very often.
- In summer John usually plays tennis once or twice a week.

I promise / I apologise etc.

Sometimes we do things by saying something. For example, when you *promise* to do something, you can say 'I promise...'; when you suggest something, you can say 'I suggest...'. We use the present simple (promise/suggest etc.) in sentences like this:

- I promise I won't be late. (*not* 'I'm promising')
- 'What do you suggest I do?' 'I suggest that you...'

In the same way we say: I apologise... / I advise... / I insist... / I agree... / I refuse... etc.

EXERCISES

2.1 Complete the sentences using one of the following:

cause(s) close(s) drink(s) live(s) open(s) ~~speak(s)~~ take(s) place

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Ann ... speak ... German very well. | 4 Bad driving many accidents. |
| 2 I never coffee. | 5 My parents in a very small flat. |
| 3 The swimming pool at 9 o'clock and at 18.30 every day. | 6 The Olympic Games every four years. |

2.2 Put the verb into the correct form.

- Jane ...*doesn't drink*... (not/drink) tea very often.
- What time (the banks / close) in Britain?
- 'Where (Martin/come) from?' 'He's Scottish.'
- 'What (you/do)?' 'I'm an electrical engineer.'
- It (take) me an hour to get to work. How long (it/take) you?
- I (play) the piano but I (not/play) very well.
- I don't understand this sentence. What (this word/mean)?

2.3 Use one of the following verbs to complete these sentences. Sometimes you need the negative:

believe eat flow go ~~grow~~ make rise tell translate

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 The earth ... <i>goes</i> ... round the sun. | 7 An interpreter from one language into another. |
| 2 Rice ... <i>doesn't grow</i> ... in Britain. | 8 A liar is someone who the truth. |
| 3 The sun in the east. | 9 The River Amazon into the Atlantic Ocean. |
| 4 Bees honey. | |
| 5 Vegetarians meat. | |
| 6 An atheist in God. | |

2.4 Ask Liz questions about herself and her family.

- You know that Liz plays tennis. You want to know how often. Ask her. How often ...*do you play tennis?*...
- Perhaps Liz's sister plays tennis too. You want to know. Ask Liz. your sister
- You know that Liz reads a newspaper every day. You want to know which one. Ask her.
- You know that Liz's brother works. You want to know what he does. Ask Liz.
- You know that Liz goes to the cinema a lot. You want to know how often. Ask her.
- You don't know where Liz's mother lives. Ask Liz.

2.5 Complete using one of the following:

I apologise I insist I promise I recommend ~~I suggest~~

- It's a nice day. ...*I suggest*... we go out for a walk.
- I won't tell anybody what you said.
- (in a restaurant) You must let me pay for the meal.
- for what I said about you. It wasn't true and I shouldn't have said it.
- The new restaurant in Hill Street is very good. it.

Present continuous and present simple (1) (I am doing and I do)

Study the explanations and compare the examples:

I am doing			I do		
past	now	future	past	now	future
<p>Present continuous (I am doing) Use the continuous for something that is happening at or around the time of speaking. The action is not finished.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The water is boiling. Can you turn it off? Listen to those people. What language are they speaking? Let's go out. It isn't raining now. 'Don't disturb me. I'm busy.' 'Why? What are you doing?' I'm going to bed now. Goodnight! Maria is in Britain at the moment. She's learning English. <p>Use the continuous for a <i>temporary</i> situation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'm living with some friends until I find a flat. 'You're working hard today.' 'Yes, I've got a lot to do.' <p>See Unit 1 for more information.</p>			<p>Present simple (I do) Use the simple for things in general or things that happen repeatedly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water boils at 100 degrees celsius. Excuse me, do you speak English? It doesn't rain very much in summer. What do you usually do at weekends? What do you do? (= What's your job?) I always go to bed before midnight. Most people learn to swim when they are children. <p>Use the simple for a <i>permanent</i> situation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> My parents live in London. They have lived there all their lives. John isn't lazy. He works very hard most of the time. <p>See Unit 2 for more information.</p>		

I always do and I'm always doing

Usually we say 'I always do something' (= I do it every time):

- I **always** go to work by car. (*not* 'I'm always going')

You can also say 'I'm always doing something', but this has a different meaning. For example:

I've lost my key again. I'm always losing things.

'I'm always losing things' does *not* mean that I lose things every time. It means that I lose things *too often, more often than normal*.

'You're always -ing' means that you do something very often, more often than the speaker thinks is normal or reasonable.

- You're **always** watching television. You should do something more active.
- John is never satisfied. He's **always** complaining.

EXERCISES

3.1 Are the underlined verbs right or wrong? Correct the verbs that are wrong.

- Water boils at 100 degrees celsius. RIGHT
- The water boils. Can you turn it off? WRONG: is boiling
- Look! That man tries to open the door of your car.
- Can you hear those people? What do they talk about?
- The moon goes round the earth.
- I must go now. It gets late.
- I usually go to work by car.
- 'Hurry up! It's time to leave.' 'OK, I come.'
- I hear you've got a new job. How do you get on?

3.2 Put the verb in the correct form, present continuous or present simple.

- Let's go out. It isn't raining (not/rain) now.
- Julia is very good at languages. She speaks (speak) four languages very well.
- Hurry up! Everybody (wait) for you.
- '..... (you/listen) to the radio?' 'No, you can turn it off.'
- '..... (you/listen) to the radio every day?' 'No, just occasionally.'
- The River Nile (flow) into the Mediterranean.
- Look at the river. It (flow) very fast today – much faster than usual.
- We usually (grow) vegetables in our garden but this year we (not/grow) any.
- 'How is your English?' 'Not bad. It (improve) slowly.'
- Ron is in London at the moment. He (stay) at the Park Hotel. He (always/stay) there when he's in London.
- Can we stop walking soon? I (start) to feel tired.
- 'Can you drive?' 'I (learn). My father (teach) me.'
- Normally I (finish) work at 5.00, but this week I (work) until 6.00 to earn a bit more money.
- My parents (live) in Bristol. They were born there and have never lived anywhere else. Where (your parents/live)?
- Sonia (look) for a place to live. She (stay) with her sister until she finds somewhere.
- 'What (your father/do)?' 'He's an architect but he (not/work) at the moment.'
- (at a party) Usually I (enjoy) parties but I (not/enjoy) this one very much.
- The train is never late. It (always/leave) on time.
- Jim is very untidy. He (always/leave) his things all over the place.

3.3 Finish B's sentences. Use always -ing (see Section B).

- A: I'm afraid I've lost my key again.
B: Not again! ...You're always losing your key.
- A: The car has broken down again.
B: That car is useless! It
- A: Look! You've made the same mistake again.
B: Oh no, not again! I
- A: Oh, I've left the lights on again.
B: Typical! You

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

We use continuous tenses only for actions and happenings (they are eating / it is raining etc.). Some verbs (for example, know and like) are *not* action verbs. You cannot say 'I am knowing' or 'they are liking'; you can only say 'I know', 'they like'.

The following verbs are not normally used in continuous tenses:

like love hate want need prefer
know realise suppose mean understand believe remember
belong contain consist depend seem

- I'm hungry. I want something to eat. (*not* 'I'm wanting')
- Do you understand what I mean?
- Ann doesn't seem very happy at the moment.

When think means 'believe', do *not* use the continuous:

- What do you think (= believe) will happen? (*not* 'what are you thinking')
- but* • You look serious. What are you thinking about? (= What is going on in your mind?)
- I'm thinking of giving up my job. (= I am considering)

When have means 'possess' etc., do *not* use the continuous (see Unit 17):

- We're enjoying our holiday. We have a nice room in the hotel. (*not* 'we're having')
- but* • We're enjoying our holiday. We're having a great time.

B See hear smell taste

We normally use the present simple (*not* continuous) with these verbs:

- Do you see that man over there? (*not* 'are you seeing')
- This room smells. Let's open a window.

We often use can + see/hear/smell/taste:

- Listen! Can you hear something?

But you can use the continuous with see (I'm seeing) when the meaning is 'having a meeting with' (especially in the future - see Unit 19A):

- I'm seeing the manager tomorrow morning.

C He is selfish and He is being selfish

The present continuous of be is I am being / he is being / you are being etc.

I'm being = 'I'm behaving / I'm acting'. Compare:

- I can't understand why he's being so selfish. He isn't usually like that. (being selfish = behaving selfishly at the moment)

but • He never thinks about other people. He is very selfish. (*not* 'he is being') (= he is selfish generally, not only at the moment)

We use am/is/are being to say how somebody is behaving. It is not usually possible in other sentences:

- It's hot today. (*not* 'it is being hot')
- Sarah is very tired. (*not* 'is being tired')

D Look and feel

You can use the present simple or continuous when you 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')

EXERCISES

4.1 Are the underlined verbs right or wrong? Correct the ones that are wrong.

- 1 I'm seeing the manager tomorrow morning. RIGHT
- 2 I'm feeling hungry. Is there anything to eat?
- 3 Are you believing in God?
- 4 This sauce is great. It's tasting really good.
- 5 I'm thinking this is your key. Am I right?

4.2 Look at the pictures. Use the words in brackets to make sentences. (You should also study Unit 3 before you do this exercise.)

1 (you / not / seem / very happy today) You don't <u>seem</u> very happy today.	4 (the dinner / smell / good)
2 (what / you / do?) Be quiet! (I / think)	5 Excuse me. (anybody / sit / here?) No, it's free.
3 (who / this umbrella / belong to?) I've no idea.	6 Can you ring me back in half an hour? (I / have / dinner)

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

- 1 Are you hungry? ... Do you want ... something to eat? (you/want)
- 2 Jill is interested in politics but she to a political party. (not/belong)
- 3 Don't put the dictionary away. I it. (use)
- 4 Don't put the dictionary away. I it. (need)
- 5 Who is that man? What? (he/want)
- 6 Who is that man? Why at us? (he/look)
- 7 George says he's 80 years old but nobody him. (believe)
- 8 She told me her name but I it now. (not/remember)
- 9 I of selling my car. (think) Would you be interested in buying it?
- 10 I you should sell your car. (think) You it very often. (not/use)
- 11 I used to drink a lot of coffee but these days I tea. (prefer)
- 12 Air mainly of nitrogen and oxygen. (consist)

4.4 Complete the sentences using the most suitable form of be. Sometimes you must use the simple (am/is/are) and sometimes the continuous is more suitable (am/is/are being).

- 1 I can't understand why ... he's being ... so selfish. He isn't usually like that.
- 2 Jack very nice to me at the moment. I wonder why.
- 3 You'll like Jill when you meet her. She very nice.
- 4 Normally you are very sensible, so why so silly about this matter?
- 5 Why isn't Sarah at work today? ill?