

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

A

Study the explanations and compare the examples:

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.

I am doing

past now future

- 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.

Use the continuous for a *temporary* situation:

- I'm **living** with some friends until I find a flat.
- 'You're **working** hard today.' 'Yes, I've got a lot to do.'

See Unit 1 for more information.

Present simple (I do)

Use the simple for things in general or things that happen repeatedly.

←----- I do -----→
past now future

- 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.

Use the simple for a *permanent* situation:

- My parents **live** in London. They have lived there all their lives.
- John **isn't** lazy. He **works** very hard most of the time.

See Unit 2 for more information.

B

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.

- 1 Water boils at 100 degrees celsius. RIGHT
- 2 The water boils. Can you turn it off? WRONG: is boiling
- 3 Look! That man tries to open the door of your car.
- 4 Can you hear those people? What do they talk about?
- 5 The moon goes round the earth.
- 6 I must go now. It gets late.
- 7 I usually go to work by car.
- 8 'Hurry up! It's time to leave.' 'OK, I come.'
- 9 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.

- 1 Let's go out. It isn't raining (not/rain) now.
- 2 Julia is very good at languages. She speaks (speak) four languages very well.
- 3 Hurry up! Everybody (wait) for you.
- 4 '..... (you/listen) to the radio?' 'No, you can turn it off.'
- 5 '..... (you/listen) to the radio every day?' 'No, just occasionally.'
- 6 The River Nile (flow) into the Mediterranean.
- 7 Look at the river. It (flow) very fast today – much faster than usual.
- 8 We usually (grow) vegetables in our garden but this year we (not/grow) any.
- 9 'How is your English?' 'Not bad. It (improve) slowly.'
- 10 Ron is in London at the moment. He (stay) at the Park Hotel. He (always/stay) there when he's in London.
- 11 Can we stop walking soon? I (start) to feel tired.
- 12 'Can you drive?' 'I (learn). My father (teach) me.'
- 13 Normally I (finish) work at 5.00, but this week I (work) until 6.00 to earn a bit more money.
- 14 My parents (live) in Bristol. They were born there and have never lived anywhere else. Where (your parents/live)?
- 15 Sonia (look) for a place to live. She (stay) with her sister until she finds somewhere.
- 16 'What (your father/do)?' 'He's an architect but he (not/work) at the moment.'
- 17 (at a party) Usually I (enjoy) parties but I (not/enjoy) this one very much.
- 18 The train is never late. It (always/leave) on time.
- 19 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).

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

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

A

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.

- I'm seeing the manager tomorrow morning. ...RIGHT...
- I'm feeling hungry. Is there anything to eat?
- Are you believing in God?
- This sauce is great. It's tasting really good.
- 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.)

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

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

- Are you hungry? ...Do you want... something to eat? (you/want)
- Jill is interested in politics but she to a political party. (not/belong)
- Don't put the dictionary away. I it. (use)
- Don't put the dictionary away. I it. (need)
- Who is that man? What? (he/want)
- Who is that man? Why at us? (he/look)
- George says he's 80 years old but nobody him. (believe)
- She told me her name but I it now. (not/remembers)
- I of selling my car. (think) Would you be interested in buying it?
- I you should sell your car. (think) You it very often. (not/use)
- I used to drink a lot of coffee but these days I tea. (prefer)
- 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 (am/is/are being).

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

KEY TO EXERCISES

In some of the exercises, you have to use your own ideas to write sentences. Example answers are given in the key. If possible, check your answers with somebody who speaks English well.

UNIT 1

1.1

- 2 'm looking / am looking
- 3 's getting / is getting
- 4 're staying / are staying
- 5 'm coming / am coming
- 6 's starting / is starting
- 7 're making / are making ...
- 'm trying / am trying
- 8 's happening / is happening

1.2

- 2 are you looking
- 3 's she studying / is she studying
- 4 Is anybody listening
- 5 Is it getting

1.3

- 3 'm not enjoying / am not enjoying
- 4 's having / is having
- 5 'm not eating / am not eating
- 6 's learning / is learning
- 7 aren't speaking / 're not speaking / are not speaking

1.4

- 1 are you doing
- 2 'm training / am training
- 3 Are you enjoying
- 4 'm not working / am not working
- 5 'm trying / am trying
- 6 'm decorating / am decorating
- 7 Are you doing
- 8 are helping

1.5

- 2 's getting / is getting
- 3 is changing
- 4 is rising or is increasing
- 5 's getting / is getting

UNIT 2

2.1

- 2 drink
- 3 opens ... closes
- 4 causes
- 5 live
- 6 take place

2.2

- 2 do the banks close
- 3 does Martin come
- 4 do you do
- 5 takes ... does it take
- 6 play ... don't play
- 7 does this word mean

2.3

- 3 rises
- 4 make
- 5 don't eat
- 6 doesn't believe
- 7 translates
- 8 doesn't tell
- 9 flows

2.4

- 2 Does your sister play tennis?
- 3 Which newspaper do you read?
- 4 What does your brother do? or What is your brother's job?
- 5 How often do you go to the cinema?
- 6 Where does your mother live?

2.5

- 2 I promise
- 3 I insist
- 4 I apologise
- 5 I recommend

UNIT 3

3.1

- 3 wrong - is trying
- 4 wrong - are they talking
- 5 right
- 6 wrong - 's getting / is getting
- 7 right
- 8 wrong - 'm coming / am coming
- 9 wrong - are you getting

3.2

- 3 's waiting / is waiting
- 4 Are you listening
- 5 Do you listen
- 6 flows
- 7 's flowing / is flowing
- 8 grow ... aren't growing / 're not growing / are not growing
- 9 's improving / is improving
- 10 's staying / is staying ... always stays
- 11 'm starting / am starting
- 12 'm learning / am learning ... is teaching
- 13 finish ... 'm working / am working
- 14 live ... do your parents live
- 15 is looking ... 's staying / is staying

- 16 does your father do ... isn't working / 's not working / is not working
- 17 enjoy ... 'm not enjoying / am not enjoying
- 18 always leaves
- 19 's always leaving / is always leaving (always leaves is also possible)

3.3

- 2 It's always breaking down.
- 3 I'm always making the same mistake. / ...that mistake.
- 4 You're always leaving the lights on.

UNIT 4

4.1

- 2 right
- 3 wrong - Do you believe
- 4 wrong - It tastes
- 5 wrong - I think

4.2

- 2 What are you doing?
I'm thinking.
- 3 Who does this umbrella belong to?
- 4 The dinner smells good.
- 5 Is anybody sitting here?
- 6 I'm having dinner.

4.3

- 2 doesn't belong / does not belong
- 3 'm using / am using
- 4 need
- 5 does he want
- 6 is he looking
- 7 believes
- 8 don't remember / do not remember
- 9 'm thinking / am thinking
- 10 think ... don't use / do not use
- 11 prefer
- 12 consists

4.4

- 2 is being
- 3 is
- 4 are you being
- 5 Is she

UNIT 5

5.1

- 2 had
- 3 She walked to work
- 4 It took her (about) half an hour
- 5 She started work
- 6 She didn't have (any) lunch. / ...eat (any) lunch.