

Grammar

1a

Present Simple and Present Continuous

Present Simple (base form)

We use the Present Simple:

- for permanent situations:
I live in a flat.
She works for an insurance company.
- for repeated actions or habits:
I use my mobile phone every day.
- for general truths:
The sun rises in the East.
Matter consists of small particles.
~~*X Water is boiling at 100 degrees.*~~
✓ Water boils at 100 degrees.
- to tell stories, or summarise the plot of a film or book:
Our hero goes off to search for the treasure, which he eventually finds after many adventures.

Present Continuous (present of *be* + ...-ing)

We use the Present Continuous:

- for temporary situations existing for a period at the present time:
I'm staying with a friend at the moment.
She's working very hard nowadays.
~~*X Just now I wait to do my military service.*~~
✓ Just now I am waiting to do my military service.
- for situations which are changing during the present time:
The weather's getting hotter and hotter.
- for actions, or repeated actions or habits, occurring at the moment of speaking:
I am using John's mobile phone because I left mine at home.
You're eating too fast.
- to express annoying habits with words like *always*:
You're always borrowing money!

- When we use *always* with the Present Simple, it usually means 'every time':
I always complain if the service is bad in restaurants.
- When we use *always* with the Present Continuous, it means 'all the time' or 'too/very often':
You're always complaining that waiters are rude.
- We cannot use *never ... again* with the Present Simple:
~~*X I never speak to you again.*~~
✓ I'm never speaking to you again.

- We do not usually use certain verbs in the Present Continuous, e.g.:
appearance: *appear, resemble, seem*
composition: *consist of, contain, have*
connection: *come from, concern, cost, fit, suit*
existence: *be, exist*
knowledge: *forget, know, realise, understand*
likes and dislikes: *dislike, hate, like, love, prefer*
needs and wants: *need, want, wish*
opinion: *believe, doubt, imagine, suppose, think*
possession: *belong to, have, own, owe, possess*
senses: *feel, hear, notice, see, smell, sound, taste*

- We can use some of the verbs at the bottom of page 14 in the Present Continuous when they have different meanings. Here are some examples:

Present Simple	Present Continuous
<i>She has (got) a big car.</i> (= possession)	<i>She is having an operation/a good time/a meal/a bath.</i> (= actively involved in)
<i>I have three brothers.</i> (= connection)	<i>They are thinking of buying a cheaper car.</i> (= considering)
<i>They think it's too expensive.</i> (= opinion)	<i>I'm just thinking.</i> (= at this moment)
<i>I feel what we did was wrong.</i> (= opinion)	<i>I am feeling exhausted.</i> (= physical reaction)
<i>Do you see what I mean?</i> (= knowledge; understand)	<i>Are you seeing a lot of Mary nowadays?</i> (= spending time with)
	<i>You're seeing things – there's nobody at the window.</i> (= imagining)
<i>This juice tastes good.</i> (= senses)	<i>He is tasting the milk to see if it's OK.</i> (= checking the quality)
<i>She appears to be very upset.</i> (= appearance)	<i>The Blues Band is appearing at the Odeon on Saturday.</i> (= performing)

- We can use verbs that describe the way we feel physically in a Simple or Continuous form with no change of meaning:

*I **feel** sick.* or: *I **am feeling** sick.*
*My feet **ache**.* or: *My feet **are aching**.*
*My leg **hurts**.* or: *My leg's **hurting**.*

Practice

- 1 Underline the correct tense, Present Simple or Present Continuous, in the following sentences.

- I'm sleeping / sleep* on Niko's sofa until I find a place of my own.
- I'm only working / only work* there for a couple of months because I'm going abroad in the summer.
- If you *aren't listening / don't listen* to the radio, why don't you switch it off?
- His only bad habit is that he *talks / is talking* too loudly.
- So in the first scene we *see / are seeing* him getting up and then he *goes out / is going out* and *meets / is meeting* a strange woman.
- You *make / are making* goulash using meat, vegetables and paprika.
- I never do anything I *feel / am feeling* is against my principles.
- He *appears / is appearing* to be very friendly but I don't know him very well.
- There's nobody at the door; you just *hear / are just hearing* things.
- I'm thinking of doing a postgraduate degree – what *do you think / are you thinking*? Is it a good idea?

- 2 Complete this letter with the correct form of the Present Simple or the Present Continuous. Use each verb in the list once. The first (0) is given as an example.

stand seem ~~write~~ be make shine stay taste look cost feel

Dear Jill,

I am writing (0) to you from Granada where everything (1) to be going just fine; we (2) nice and relaxed. We (3) in a gorgeous hotel just down the road from the Alhambra, which (4) an old fortress built by the Moors. It (5) at the top of the hill just opposite our hotel and we can see this wonderful building through our window. It (6) absolutely magnificent! The hotel is lovely, but unfortunately it (7) a lot to stay here! Eating out is great. Have you heard of gazpacho? It's a cold cucumber and tomato soup which they (8) with oil, vinegar and garlic and it (9) delicious.

Well, outside the sun (10) so I'm off to get a bit of a suntan; I hope everything's OK back in Birmingham.

Lucy

- 3 Read the text below and look carefully at each line. In most of the lines there is one word too many, a word that does not fit grammatically. Write this unwanted word on the right. If a line is correct, put a tick (✓). The first two are given as examples.

THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT

- | | | |
|----|---|-------|
| 0 | This week in Kyoto in Japan the latest conference | ✓ |
| 00 | on the environment is being taking place. The whole | being |
| 1 | world is today watching to see what happens | ..... |
| 2 | as delegates from more than 165 countries discuss | ..... |
| 3 | what measures need not to be taken to reduce the | ..... |
| 4 | fumes that do create the Greenhouse Effect. They | ..... |
| 5 | are hope to agree on ways of reducing the amount | ..... |
| 6 | of carbon dioxide and other gases that we | ..... |
| 7 | send into the atmosphere. These gases to act the way a | ..... |
| 8 | greenhouse does and, as a result, the Earth is | ..... |
| 9 | be getting hotter and hotter all the time. The | ..... |
| 10 | temperature it is rising gradually and | ..... |
| 11 | in 100 years' time the Earth will be hotter by about 4°C. | ..... |
| 12 | The problem is be getting worse as more cars | ..... |
| 13 | are make an appearance on our already crowded roads. | ..... |
| 14 | The solution in Kyoto is depends on what the United States, | ..... |
| 15 | the most powerful nation on Earth, feels is in its interests. | ..... |

4 Complete these sentences using the Present Simple or the Present Continuous. Use the verb given in brackets.

- 1 My sister (wait) patiently for her exam results.
- 2 We (not travel) by train very often.
- 3 I (consider) accepting that job in Crete.
- 4 The film (end) with a dramatic car chase.
- 5 I'm sorry, I (feel) too tired to go out this evening.
- 6 We (have) a great time here in London.
- 7 you (see) much of your brother these days?
- 8 We (rely) on you to bring the keys with you.
- 9 I (wish) people didn't smoke in restaurants.
- 10 Who you (think) you are, speaking to me like that!

5 Complete these sentences using the Present Simple or the Present Continuous. Use the verbs given in brackets. Add *never* or *always* if this is also given.

- 1 I (use; *never*) my mobile phone if I (drive).
- 2 I (like; *always*) to get post but I (seem; *never*) to have the time to reply.
- 3 The heroine (prefer) to be with Paul because James (argue; *always*).
- 4 Maria (forget; *always*) what time the soap (start).
- 5 You (moan; *always*) about the state of the flat but you (help; *never*) me.
- 6 Turtles (lay; *always*) their eggs on the same beach; however, they (come; *never*) in winter.
- 7 Whether I (go) swimming or not (depend on; *always*) the weather.
- 8 I (shop; *never*) here again – they (be; *always*) so rude.
- 9 We (smell; *always*) cooking when we (pass) your house.
- 10 He (borrow; *always*) money but he (pay; *always*) me back.

