

Present continuous (I am doing)

A Study this example situation:

Sarah is in her car. She is on her way to work.
She **is driving** to work.

This means: she is driving *now*, at the time of speaking.
The action is not finished.

Am/is/are + -ing is the *present continuous*:

I	am	(= I'm)	driving
he/she/it	is	(= he's etc.)	working
we/you/they	are	(= we're etc.)	doing etc.



B **I am doing** something = I'm in the middle of doing it; I've started doing it and I haven't finished:

- Please don't make so much noise. **I'm trying** to work. (*not* I try)
- 'Where's Mark?' 'He's **having** a shower.' (*not* He has a shower)
- Let's go out now. It **isn't raining** any more. (*not* It doesn't rain)
- (*at a party*) Hi, Jane. **Are you enjoying** the party? (*not* Do you enjoy)
- What's all that noise? **What's going** on? (= What's happening?)

Sometimes the action is not happening at the time of speaking. For example:

Steve is talking to a friend on the phone. He says:



I'm reading a really good book at the moment.
It's about a man who ...

Steve is not reading the book at the time of speaking.
He means that he has started it, but has not finished it yet.
He is in the middle of reading it.

Some more examples:

- Kate wants to work in Italy, so she's **learning** Italian. (*but perhaps she isn't learning Italian at the time of speaking*)
- Some friends of mine **are building** their own house. They hope to finish it next summer.

C You can use the present continuous with **today / this week / this year** etc. (periods around now):

- A: You're **working hard today**. (*not* You work hard today)
- B: Yes, I have a lot to do.
- The company I work for **isn't doing** so well **this year**.

D We use the present continuous when we talk about changes happening around now, especially with these verbs:

get change become increase rise fall grow improve begin start

- Is** your English **getting** better? (*not* Does your English get better)
- The population of the world **is increasing** very fast. (*not* increases)
- At first I didn't like my job, but I'm **beginning** to enjoy it now. (*not* I begin)

Exercises

1.1 The sentences on the right follow those on the left. Which sentence goes with which?

- 1 Please don't make so much noise.
- 2 I need to eat something soon.
- 3 I don't have anywhere to live right now.
- 4 We need to leave soon.
- 5 They don't need their car any more.
- 6 Things are not so good at work.
- 7 It isn't true what they said.
- 8 We're going to get wet.

- a It's getting late.
- b They're lying.
- c It's starting to rain.
- d They're trying to sell it.
- e I'm getting hungry.
- f ~~I'm trying to work.~~
- g I'm looking for an apartment.
- h The company is losing money.

- 1 f
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8

1.2 Complete the conversations.

- 1 A: I saw Brian a few days ago.
B: Oh, did you? What's he doing these days? (what / he / do)
A: He's at university.
B:? (what / he / study)
A: Psychology.
B: it? (he / enjoy)
A: Yes, he says it's a very good course.
- 2 A: Hi, Nicola. How? (your new job / go)
B: Not bad. It wasn't so good at first, but better now.
(it / get)
A: What about Daniel? Is he OK?
B: Yes, but his work right now. (he / not / enjoy)
He's been in the same job for a long time and to get bored
with it. (he / begin)

1.3 Put the verb into the correct form, positive (I'm doing etc.) or negative (I'm not doing etc.).

- 1 Please don't make so much noise. I'm trying (I / try) to work.
- 2 Let's go out now. It isn't raining (it / rain) any more.
- 3 You can turn off the radio. (I / listen) to it.
- 4 Kate phoned me last night. She's on holiday in France. (she / have)
a great time and doesn't want to come back.
- 5 I want to lose weight, so this week (I / eat) lunch.
- 6 Andrew has just started evening classes. (he / learn) Japanese.
- 7 Paul and Sally have had an argument. (they / speak)
to each other.
- 8 (I / get) tired. I need a rest.
- 9 Tim (work) today. He's taken the day off.
- 10 (I / look) for Sophie. Do you know where she is?

1.4 Complete the sentences using the following verbs:

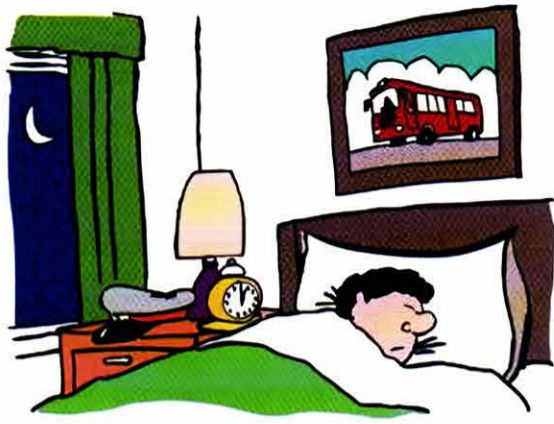
start get ~~increase~~ change rise

- 1 The population of the world is increasing very fast.
- 2 The world Things never stay the same.
- 3 The situation is already bad and it worse.
- 4 The cost of living Every year things are more expensive.
- 5 The weather to improve. The rain has stopped, and the wind isn't
as strong.

Present simple (I do)

A

Study this example situation:



Alex is a bus driver, but now he is in bed asleep.
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.
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he/she/it	drives/works/does	etc.
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B

We use the present simple to talk about things in general. We use it to say that something happens all the time or repeatedly, or that something is true in general:

- Nurses **look** after patients in hospitals.
- I usually **go** away at weekends.
- The earth **goes** round the sun.
- The cafe **opens** at 7.30 in the morning.

Remember:

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

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

C

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	drive?	he/she/it	doesn't	drive
		do?			do

- I come from Canada. Where **do** you **come** from?
- I **don't go** away very often.
- 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 (do you **do** / doesn't **do** etc.):

- 'What **do** you **do**?' 'I work in a shop.'
- He's always so lazy. He **doesn't do** anything to help.

D

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

- I **get** up at 8 o'clock **every morning**.
- How often** do you **go** to the dentist?
- Julie **doesn't drink** tea **very often**.
- Robert usually **goes** away **two or three times a year**.

E

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** ...':

- 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 the following verbs:

cause(s) connect(s) drink(s) live(s) open(s) ~~speaks(s)~~ take(s)

- 1 Tanya speaks German very well.
- 2 I don't often coffee.
- 3 The swimming pool at 7.30 every morning.
- 4 Bad driving many accidents.
- 5 My parents in a very small flat.
- 6 The Olympic Games place every four years.
- 7 The Panama Canal the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

2.2 Put the verb into the correct form.

- 1 Julie doesn't drink (not / drink) tea very often.
- 2 What time (the banks / close) here?
- 3 I've got a car, but I (not / use) it much.
- 4 'Where (Ricardo / come) from?' 'From Cuba.'
- 5 'What (you / do)?' 'I'm an electrician.'
- 6 It (take) me an hour to get to work. How long (it / take) you?
- 7 Look at this sentence. What (this word / mean)?
- 8 David isn't very fit. He (not / do) any sport.

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

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

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 The earth <u>goes</u> round the sun. | 7 An interpreter from one language into another. |
| 2 Rice <u>doesn't grow</u> in Britain. | 8 Liars are people 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 You ask Lisa questions about herself and her family. Write the questions.

- 1 You know that Lisa plays tennis. You want to know how often. Ask her.
How often do you play tennis ?
- 2 Perhaps Lisa's sister plays tennis too. You want to know. Ask Lisa.
..... your sister ?
- 3 You know that Lisa reads a newspaper every day. You want to know which one. Ask her.
..... ?
- 4 You know that Lisa's brother works. You want to know what he does. Ask Lisa.
..... ?
- 5 You know that Lisa goes to the cinema a lot. You want to know how often. Ask her.
..... ?
- 6 You don't know where Lisa's grandparents live. You want to know. Ask Lisa.
..... ?

2.5 Complete using the following:

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

- 1 Mr Evans is not in the office today. I suggest you try calling him tomorrow.
- 2 I won't tell anybody what you said.
- 3 (*in a restaurant*) You must let me pay for the meal.
- 4 for what I did. It won't happen again.
- 5 The new restaurant in Hill Street is very good. it.

A

Compare:

Present continuous (I am doing)

We use the continuous for things happening at or around the time of speaking. The action is not complete.



- 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.
- 'I'm busy.' 'What **are you doing**?'
- I'm **getting** hungry. Let's go and eat.
- Kate wants to work in Italy, so she's **learning** Italian.
- The population of the world **is increasing** very fast.

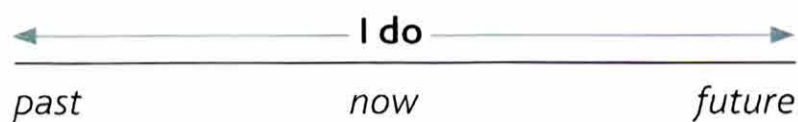
We use the continuous for *temporary* situations:

- I'm **living** with some friends until I find a place of my own.
- A: You're **working** hard today.
B: Yes, I have a lot to do.

See Unit 1 for more information.

Present simple (I do)

We use the simple for things in general or things that happen repeatedly.



- 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?
- I always **get** hungry in the afternoon.
- Most people **learn** to swim when they are children.
- Every day the population of the world **increases** by about 200,000 people.

We use the simple for *permanent* situations:

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

See Unit 2 for more information.

B

I always do and I'm always doing

I **always do** (something) = I do it every time:

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

'I'm always doing something' has a different meaning. For example:



I'm **always losing** things = I lose things very often, perhaps too often, or more often than normal.

More examples:

- You're **always playing** computer games. You should do something more active. (= You play computer games too often)
- Tim is never satisfied. He's **always complaining**. (= He complains too much)

Exercises

3.1 Are the underlined verbs right or wrong? Correct them where necessary.

- 1 Water boils at 100 degrees Celsius. OK
- 2 The water boils. Can you turn it off? 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 in about 27 days.
- 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?
- 10 Paul is never late. He's always getting to work on time.
- 11 They don't get on well. They're always arguing.

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

- 1 Let's go out. It isn't raining (it / not / rain) now.
- 2 Julia is very good at languages. She speaks (she / 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 The river (flow) very fast today – much faster than usual.
- 8 (we / usually / grow) vegetables in our garden, but this year (we / not / grow) any.
- 9 A: How's your English?
B: Not bad. I think (it / improve) slowly.
- 10 Rachel is in New York right now. (she / stay) at the Park Hotel.
..... (she / always / stay) there when she's in New York.
- 11 Can we stop walking soon? (I / start) to feel tired.
- 12 A: Can you drive?
B: (I / learn). My father (teach) me.
- 13 Normally (I / finish) work at five, but this week (I / work) until six to earn a little more money.
- 14 My parents (live) in Manchester. 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 A: What (your brother / do)?
B: He's an architect, but (he / not / work) at the moment.
- 17 (at a party) (I / usually enjoy) parties, but (I / not / enjoy) this one very much.

3.3 Finish B's sentences. Use **always -ing**.

- 1 A: I've lost my phone again.
B: Not again! You're always losing your phone.....
- 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 forgotten my glasses again.
B: Typical!

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

A

We use continuous forms for actions and happenings that have started but not finished (they **are eating** / it **is raining** etc.). Some verbs (for example, **know** and **like**) are not normally used in this way. We don't say 'I am knowing' or '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	suppose	mean	understand	believe	remember
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 at the moment.

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 plan? (= 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

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**:

- I **can hear** a strange noise. **Can** you **hear** it?

D

Look feel

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)

E

He is selfish and He is being selfish

He's **being** = He's behaving / He's 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)
- 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:





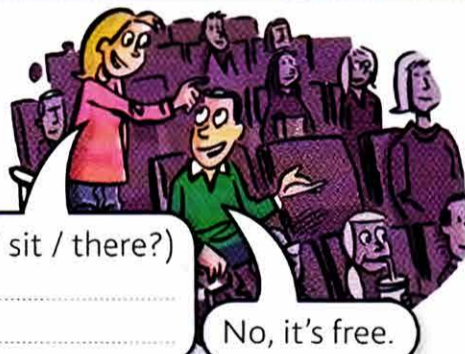

- It's hot today. (*not* It is being hot)
- Sarah **is** very tired. (*not* is being tired)

Exercises

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

- 1 Are you hungry? Do you want (you / want) something to eat?
- 2 Don't put the dictionary away. _____ (I / use) it.
- 3 Don't put the dictionary away. _____ (I / need) it.
- 4 Who is that man? What _____ (he / want)?
- 5 Who is that man? Why _____ (he / look) at us?
- 6 Alan says he's 80 years old, but nobody _____ (believe) him.
- 7 She told me her name, but _____ (I / not / remember) it now.
- 8 _____ (I / think) of selling my car. Would you be interested in buying it?
- 9 _____ (I / think) you should sell your car. _____
(you / not / use) it very often.
- 10 Air _____ (consist) mainly of nitrogen and oxygen.

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

<p>1</p>  <p>(you / not / seem / very happy today) You <u>don't seem</u> very happy today.</p>	<p>2</p>  <p>(what / you / do?) Be quiet! (I / think)</p>
<p>3</p>  <p>(who / this umbrella / belong to?) I have no idea.</p>	<p>4</p>  <p>(the dinner / smell / good)</p>
<p>5</p>  <p>Excuse me. (anybody / sit / there?) No, it's free.</p>	<p>6</p>  <p>(these gloves / not / fit / me) They're too small.</p>

4.3 Are the underlined verbs right or wrong? Correct them where necessary.

- 1 Nicky is thinking of giving up her job. OK
- 2 Are you believing in God? _____
- 3 I'm feeling hungry. Is there anything to eat? _____
- 4 This sauce is great. It's tasting really good. _____
- 5 I'm thinking this is your key. Am I right? _____

4.4 Complete the sentences using the most suitable form of **be**. Use **am/is/are being** (continuous) where possible; otherwise use **am/is/are** (simple).

- 1 I can't understand why he's being so selfish. He isn't usually like that.
- 2 Sarah _____ very nice to me at the moment. I wonder why.
- 3 You'll like Sophie when you meet her. She _____ very nice.
- 4 You're usually very patient, so why _____ so unreasonable about waiting ten more minutes?
- 5 Why isn't Steve 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 e
- 3 g
- 4 a
- 5 d
- 6 h
- 7 b
- 8 c

1.2

- 1 What's / What is he studying
Is he enjoying
- 2 's / is your new job going
it's getting / it is getting
he isn't enjoying / he's not
enjoying
he's beginning / he is
beginning

1.3

- 3 I'm not listening / I am not
listening
- 4 She's having / She is having
- 5 I'm not eating / I am not eating
- 6 He's learning / He is learning
- 7 They aren't speaking / They're not
speaking / They are not speaking
- 8 I'm getting / I am getting
- 9 isn't working / 's not working /
is not working
- 10 I'm looking / I am looking

1.4

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

UNIT 2

2.1

- 2 drink
- 3 opens
- 4 causes
- 5 live
- 6 take
- 7 connects

2.2

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

2.3

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

2.4

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

2.5

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

UNIT 3

3.1

- 3 is trying
- 4 are they talking
- 5 OK
- 6 It's getting / It is getting
- 7 OK
- 8 I'm coming / I am coming
- 9 are you getting
- 10 He always gets
- 11 OK

3.2

- 3 Everybody's waiting / Everybody is
waiting
- 4 Are you listening
- 5 Do you listen
- 6 flows
- 7 's flowing / is flowing
- 8 We usually grow ... we aren't
growing / we're not growing /
we are not growing
- 9 it's improving / it is improving
- 10 She's staying / She is staying ...
She always stays
- 11 I'm starting / I am starting
- 12 I'm learning / I am learning ...
's teaching / is teaching
- 13 I finish ... I'm working / I am working
- 14 live ... do your parents live
- 15 's looking / is looking ...
She's staying / She is staying
- 16 does your brother do ...
he isn't working / he's not working /
he is not working
- 17 I usually enjoy ... I'm not enjoying /
I am not enjoying

3.3

- 2 It's always breaking down.
- 3 I'm always making the same
mistake. / ... that mistake.
- 4 You're always forgetting your glasses.

UNIT 4

4.1

- 2 I'm using / I am using
- 3 I need
- 4 does he want
- 5 is he looking
- 6 believes
- 7 I don't remember / I do not
remember or I can't remember
- 8 I'm thinking / I am thinking
- 9 I think ... You don't use
- 10 consists

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 there?
- 6 These gloves don't fit me.

4.3

- 2 Do you believe
- 3 OK (I feel *is also correct*)
- 4 It tastes
- 5 I think

4.4

- 2 's being / is being
- 3 's / is
- 4 are you being
- 5 Is he

UNIT 5

5.1

- 2 She 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.
- 7 She finished work
- 8 She was tired when she got home.
- 9 She cooked
- 10 She didn't go
- 11 She went to bed
- 12 She slept