

Present continuous (I am doing)

A

Study this example situation:

Ann 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

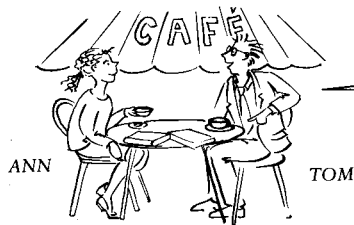
I am doing something = I'm in the middle of doing something; I've started doing it and I haven't finished yet.

Often the action is happening at the time of speaking:

- Please don't make so much noise. **I'm working.** (*not* 'I work')
- 'Where's Margaret?' 'She's **having** a bath.' (*not* 'she has a bath')
- Let's go out now. It **isn't raining** any more. (*not* 'it doesn't rain')
- (*at a party*) Hello, Jane. **Are you enjoying** the party? (*not* 'do you enjoy')
- I'm tired. **I'm going** to bed now. Goodnight!

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

Tom and Ann are talking in a café. Tom says:



I'm **reading** an interesting book at the moment.
I'll lend it to you when I've finished it.

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

Some more examples:

- Catherine wants to work in Italy, so she is **learning** Italian. (but perhaps she isn't learning Italian exactly at the time of speaking)
- Some friends of mine **are building** their own house. They hope it will be finished before next summer.

C

We use the present continuous when we talk about things happening in a period around now (for example, **today / this week / this evening** etc.):

- 'You're **working** hard today.' 'Yes, I have a lot to do.' (*not* 'you work hard today')
- 'Is Susan **working** this week?' 'No, she's on holiday.'

We use the present continuous when we talk about changes happening around now:

- The population of the world is **rising** very fast. (*not* 'rises')
- Is your English **getting** better? (*not* 'does your English get better')

EXERCISES

1.1 Complete the sentences with one of the following verbs in the correct form:

come get happen look make start stay try work

- 1 'You **'re working**... hard today.' 'Yes, I have a lot to do.'
- 2 I for Christine. Do you know where she is?
- 3 It dark. Shall I turn on the light?
- 4 They haven't got anywhere to live at the moment. They with friends until they find somewhere.
- 5 'Are you ready, Ann?' 'Yes, I
- 6 Have you got an umbrella? It to rain.
- 7 You a lot of noise. Could you be quieter? I to concentrate.
- 8 Why are all these people here? What

1.2 Use the words in brackets to complete the questions.

- 1 '**Is Colin working**... this week?' 'No, he's on holiday.' (Colin/work)
- 2 Why at me like that? What's the matter? (you/look)
- 3 'Jenny is a student at university.' 'Is she? What?' (she/study)
- 4 to the radio or can I turn it off? (anybody/listen)
- 5 How is your English? better? (it/get)

1.3 Put the verb into the correct form. Sometimes you need the negative (I'm not doing etc.).

- 1 I'm tired. I **'m going**... (go) to bed now. Goodnight!
- 2 We can go out now. It **isn't raining**... (rain) any more.
- 3 'How is your new job?' 'Not so good at the moment. I (enjoy) it very much.'
- 4 Catherine 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 Angela has just started evening classes. She (learn) German.
- 7 I think Paul and Ann have had an argument. They (speak) to each other.

1.4 Read this conversation between Brian and Sarah. Put the verbs into the correct form.

SARAH: Brian! How nice to see you! What (1) (you/do) these days?

BRIAN: I (2) (train) to be a supermarket manager.

SARAH: Really? What's it like? (3) (you/enjoy) it?

BRIAN: It's all right. What about you?

SARAH: Well, actually I (4) (not/work) at the moment.

I (5) (try) to find a job but it's not easy.

But I'm very busy. I (6) (decorate) my flat.

BRIAN: (7) (you/do) it alone?

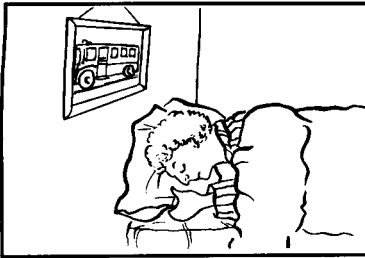
SARAH: No, some friends of mine (8) (help) me.

1.5 Complete the sentences using one of these verbs: get change rise fall increase
You don't have to use all the verbs and you can use a verb more than once.

- 1 The population of the world **is rising**... very fast.
- 2 Ken is still ill but he better slowly.
- 3 The world Things never stay the same.
- 4 The cost of living Every year things are more expensive.
- 5 The economic situation is already very bad and it worse.

Present simple (I do)

A 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.

B 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.

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	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')

D 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.

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**...'. 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) ~~speaks~~ take(s) place

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

2.2 Put the verb into the correct form.

- 1 Jane ~~doesn't drink~~ (not/drink) tea very often.
- 2 What time (the banks / close) in Britain?
- 3 'Where (Martin/come) from?' 'He's Scottish.'
- 4 'What (you/do)?' 'I'm an electrical engineer.'
- 5 It (take) me an hour to get to work. How long (it/take) you?
- 6 I (play) the piano but I (not/play) very well.
- 7 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 ~~goes~~ round the sun.
- 2 Rice ~~doesn't grow~~ in Britain.
- 3 The sun-..... in the east.
- 4 Bees honey.
- 5 Vegetarians meat.
- 6 An atheist in God.
- 7 An interpreter from one language into another.
- 8 A liar is someone who the truth.
- 9 The River Amazon into the Atlantic Ocean.

2.4 Ask Liz questions about herself and her family.

- 1 You know that Liz plays tennis. You want to know how often. Ask her.
How often ~~do you play tennis?~~
- 2 Perhaps Liz's sister plays tennis too. You want to know. Ask Liz.
..... your sister
- 3 You know that Liz reads a newspaper every day. You want to know which one. Ask her.
.....
- 4 You know that Liz's brother works. You want to know what he does. Ask Liz.
.....
- 5 You know that Liz goes to the cinema a lot. You want to know how often. Ask her.
.....
- 6 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~~

- 1 It's a nice day. ~~I suggest~~ we go out for a walk.
- 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 said about you. It wasn't true and I shouldn't have said it.
- 5 The new restaurant in Hill Street is very good. it.

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

A Study the explanations and compare the examples:

I am doing	I do
<p><i>Present continuous (I am doing)</i> Use the continuous for something that is happening at or around the time of speaking. The action is not finished.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">←----- I do -----→</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>past</i> <i>now</i> <i>future</i></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><i>Present simple (I do)</i> Use the simple for things in general or things that happen repeatedly.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">←----- I do -----→</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>past</i> <i>now</i> <i>future</i></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>


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 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

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?

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 <u>seem</u> 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> 

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)

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?

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.