

# Present simple Vs present continuous

Form

PRESENT SIMPLE		PRESENT CONTINUOUS	
POSITIVE	I/You/We/They work He/She/It works	POSITIVE	I am working You/We/They are working He/She/It is working
NEGATIVE	I/You/We/They don't work He/She/It doesn't work	NEGATIVE	I'm not working You/We/They aren't working He/She/It isn't working
QUESTION	Do I/you/we/they work? Does he/she/it work?	QUESTION	Am I working? Are you/we/they working? Is he/she/it working?
SHORT ANSWER	Yes, I/you/we/they do he/she/it does No, I/you/we/they don't he/she/it doesn't	SHORT ANSWER	Yes, I am You/We/They are He/She/It is No, I'm not You/We/They aren't He/She/It isn't

## Present simple – short forms

We normally use short forms in spoken English.

- do not = don't
- does not = doesn't

## Present continuous – short forms

We normally use short forms in spoken English.

- am not = 'm not
- is not = isn't/'s not
- are not = aren't/'re not

## Present simple vs present continuous use

# PRESENT SIMPLE VS CONTINUOUS – MEANING

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## PRESENT SIMPLE

### Habits. Regular actions or situations

- ⇒ I wash my hair every day.
- ⇒ He usually gets up very early.

### Facts, permanent situations or states

- ⇒ I have one brother. He lives in Paris.
- ⇒ Water boils at 100 degrees.

### With stative verbs\*

- ⇒ Give me the money. I need it now.
- ⇒ What happened? You look sad.

### Future timetabled events

- ⇒ The train leaves at 4.
- ⇒ The exams start next Monday.

**SIGNAL WORDS:** Always, never, often, sometimes, every day, once a month, etc.

## PRESENT CONTINUOUS

### Actions in progress 'now'/'around now'

- ⇒ I can't talk. I'm brushing my teeth.
- ⇒ I'm reading a new book. I love it!

### Temporary actions or situations

- ⇒ I'm going to work by bus this week.
- ⇒ I'm living with my cousins until I find an apartment.

### Changing or developing situations

- ⇒ The climate is changing very quickly.
- ⇒ Your English is improving.

### Future actions that are decided

- ⇒ I'm meeting John this evening.
- ⇒ We are leaving tomorrow at 7 a.m.

**SIGNAL WORDS:** Now, at the moment, these days, this week/month, etc.

\*Verbs of the senses: hear, see, smell, look, seem, sound. Opinion: believe, consider, like, love, hate, prefer, think, etc. Possession: have, own, belong, etc. Also: agree, be, depend, need, mean, remember, realise, recognise, seem, want, etc.

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## Present simple use

### Habits or situations that happen regularly

We use the present simple to talk about actions that we do (or we don't do) regularly:

- I wash my hair every day.
- I never go to the library.
- I sometimes go to the library.

### Permanent situations or things that are usually or often true

- I don't drink coffee.
- She's very tall.
- I have two brothers.
- Water boils at 100 degrees. I like soup.

### Adverbs of frequency

We often use the present simple with adverbs of frequency (always, sometimes, etc.) and expressions of frequency (once every three months, twice a week, every other day, etc.). Adverbs of frequency go in mid position (before the main verb or after be).

- She doesn't often eat hamburgers.
- He usually gets up very early.
- I am never late.

### Expressions of frequency go at the end of the sentence

- We go to the cinema once a month.
- I buy clothes twice a year.

### *Future events that are timetabled*

We use the present simple to talk about future events that are scheduled or timetabled.

- The train leaves at 4.
- Shops close at 6.
- My yoga class is tomorrow at 10.

### Present continuous use

#### *Actions in progress*

We use the present continuous to talk about things that are happening now or 'around now' (a time around this moment, such as these days, weeks or months)

- I can't talk now. I'm brushing my teeth.
- I finished the Lord of the Rings and now I'm reading a new book.

#### *Temporary actions*

The present continuous is used to talk about temporary actions:

- I'm going to work by bus this week because my car is at the garage.
- I'm living with my cousins until I find a flat.

#### *With expressions meaning 'now' or 'around now'.*

The present continuous often appears next to expressions such as now, these days, this week/month, or at the moment.

- He's studying a lot this week.
- I'm not feeling very well these days.

#### *Situations that are changing or developing*

- The climate is changing very quickly.
- More and more people are trying to eat more healthily nowadays.
- Your English is improving.

#### *Future arrangements*

We use the present continuous to talk or ask about future actions that are already planned or decided.

- I'm meeting John this evening. Do you want to come?
- We are leaving tomorrow at 7.

### Stative verbs

Non-action verbs (or stative verbs) cannot be used in present continuous. They must be used in present simple. The most frequent are the

verbs of the senses (hear, see, smell, look, seem, sound),

verbs of opinion (believe, consider, like, love, hate, prefer, think, etc.)

verbs of possession (have, own, belong, etc.).

Other common non-action verbs are: agree, be, depend, need, mean, remember, realise, recognise, seem, want, etc.

- Please, give me my money; I need it now.
- Look at her; she seems sad.

Some verbs have an action and a non-action meaning; for example, have or think:

- I have a car (=possession) / I'm having a siesta (=action)
- I think he is great (=opinion) / What are you thinking? (=action)

The verb see also has a dynamic and a stative meaning.

- I'm seeing the doctor tomorrow at 9. (see= 'have an appointment')
- What do you see in this picture? (see= 'see with your eyes')