

University of Tikrit

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Present Simple and Present Continuous

Head way

Second year

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2025-2026

Present Simple and Present Continuous

The simple present tense in English is used to describe an action that is regular, true or normal.

We use the present tense:

1. For repeated or regular actions in the present time period.

- I take the train to the office.
- The train to Berlin leaves every hour.
- John sleeps eight hours every night during the week.

2. For facts.

- The President of The USA lives in The White House.
- A dog has four legs.
- We come from Switzerland.

3. For habits.

- I get up early every day.
- Carol brushes her teeth twice a day.
- They travel to their country house every weekend.

4. For things that are always / generally true.

- It rains a lot in winter.
- The Queen of England lives in Buckingham Palace.
- They speak English at work.

2) Verb Conjugation and Spelling

We form the present tense using the base form of the infinitive (without the to).

In general, in the third person we add 'S' in the third person.

Subject	Verb	The Rest of the sentence
I / you / we / they	speak / learn	English at home
he / she / it	speaks / learns	English at home

The spelling for the verb in the third person differs depending on the ending of that verb:

1. For verbs that end in -O, -CH, -SH, -SS, -X, or -Z we add -ES in the third person.

- go – goes
- catch – catches
- wash – washes
- kiss – kisses
- fix – fixes
- buzz – buzzes

2. For verbs that end in a consonant + Y, we remove the Y and add -IES.

- marry – marries
- study – studies
- carry – carries
- worry – in worries

NOTE: For verbs that end in a vowel + Y, we just add -S.

- play – plays
- enjoy – enjoys
- say – says

3) Negative Sentences in the Simple Present Tense

To make a negative sentence in English we normally use Don't or Doesn't with all verbs except (to be) and (Modal verbs) (can, might, should etc.).

- Affirmative: You speak French.
Negative: You don't speak French.

You will see that we add don't between the subject and the verb. We use Don't when the subject is I, you, we or they.

- Affirmative: He speaks German.
Negative: He doesn't speak German.

When the subject is he, she or it, we add doesn't between the subject and the verb to make a negative sentence. Notice that the letter S at the end of the verb in the affirmative sentence (because it is in third person) disappears in the negative sentence.

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4) Questions in the Simple Present Tense

To make a question in English we normally use Do or Does. It has no translation in Spanish though it is essential to show we are making a question. It is normally put at the beginning of the question.

- Affirmative: You speak English.
Question: Do you speak English?

You will see that we add do at the beginning of the affirmative sentence to make it a question. We use do when the subject is I, you, we or they.

- Affirmative: He speaks French.
Question: Does he speak French?

When the subject is he, she or it, we add does at the beginning to make the affirmative sentence a question. Notice that the letter S at the end of the verb in the affirmative sentence (because it is in third person) disappears in the question. We will see the reason why below.

We don't use do or does in questions that have the verb to be or modal verbs (can, must, might, should etc.)

5) What is the present continuous tense?

Define the present continuous tense and explain its general use to describe actions happening at the moment of speaking or around the current time. The present continuous tense is like a live broadcast. It's used to describe actions that are *happening right now, around this time*, or even *temporary situations*. For example: "I am watching the new shark movie on Netflix and eating ice cream." Wow, multitasking! Two things — nobody said it had to be fascinating — happening in real-time.

6) Types of Sentences in Present Continuous

Present Continuous sentences fall into three main types: Affirmative (positive statements), Negative (denials), and Interrogative (questions), all following the structure of Subject + (am/is/are) + Verb(-ing), used for actions happening now, temporary situations, or future plans. For example: *Affirmative*: "She is reading." *Negative*: "She is not reading." *Interrogative*: "Is she reading?".

1. Affirmative Sentences (Statements)

- Used to state that something is happening.
- Structure: Subject + am/is/are + Verb(-ing).
- Examples:
 - "I am studying right now."
 - "They are playing outside."
 - "The dog is barking."

2. Negative Sentences

- Used to deny that something is happening.
- Structure: Subject + am/is/are + not + Verb(-ing).

- Examples:
 - "He is not listening."
 - "We are not going to the party."
 - "It is not raining."

3. Interrogative Sentences (Questions)

- Used to ask if something is happening.
- Structure: Am/Is/Are + Subject + Verb(-ing)?.
- Examples:
 - "Are you working?"
 - "Is she coming home?"
 - "What are they doing?" (Wh- Questions)

7) Uses of Present Continuous

- Actions Happening Now: "I am writing this article."
- Temporary Situations: "He is living in a hotel this week."
- Future Plans: "We are meeting friends on Friday."
- Habits/Trends: "Electric cars are gaining

8) Differences between present Simple and Present Continuous

The Present Simple describes habits, general truths, facts, and scheduled futures (e.g., *I walk*), while the Present Continuous (or progressive) describes temporary actions happening now, evolving situations, and definite future plans (e.g., *I am walking*). The Simple uses base verbs (add 's' for he/she/it), whereas Continuous uses 'be' + verb-ing (am/is/are + verb-ing) and avoids stative verbs (like, know, have).

Present Simple

- Habits/Routines: *She drinks coffee every morning.*
- Facts/General Truths: *The sun rises in the east.*
- Permanent Situations: *He works in London.*
- Scheduled Future: *The train leaves at 5 PM.*

- Stative Verbs: *I like pizza.* (Not *I am liking pizza*)

Present Continuous

- Actions Happening Now: *I am reading a book.*
- Temporary Situations: *They are staying with friends this week.*
- Changing Situations: *The climate is getting warmer.*
- Definite Future Plans: *We are meeting tomorrow.*
- Annoying Habits (with 'always'): *He is always losing his keys.*

Key Differences Summarized

- Time: Simple (always/generally) vs. Continuous (right now/around now).
- Nature: Simple (permanent/habitual) vs. Continuous (temporary/changing).
- Structure: Simple (Verb/Verb+s) vs. Continuous (be + Verb-ing).
- Verb Types: Simple (works with stative verbs) vs. Continuous (avoids stative verbs).