

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.

#### I am doing

past    now    future

- 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.

#### I do

past    now    future

- 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?