

## Present continuous tense

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### Form

Positive statement: *I am playing, You are playing, He is playing*

Negative statement: *I am not playing (I'm not playing), You are not playing (You aren't playing), He is not playing (He isn't playing)*

Question: *Are you playing? Is he playing?*

Negative question: *Are you not playing? (Aren't you playing?) Is he not playing? (Isn't he playing?)*

The present continuous tense is formed with the verb to be and the present participle (-ing ending).

The negative question normally expresses a surprise: *Isn't he working?*

### Use

The present continuous tense is used:

1. If we want to say that something is happening at the time of speaking. We often use it with time expressions such as *now* or *at the moment*.

*I am doing housework at the moment.*

*You aren't listening to me now!*

*Look at him! What is he doing?*

2. For temporary activities that are true now, but maybe not happening at the time of speaking. Time expressions such as *today*, *this week* or *these days* are typical of this use.

*I am in London. I am learning English here.*

*She can't go out today. She is preparing for an exam.*

*You can't meet him this week. He is working in Bath.*

3. For planned future arrangements. The time of the action must be given in the sentence (*soon*, *tomorrow*, *on Monday*, *next week*), otherwise it is not clear that we talk about future.

*I am coming soon.*

*We are leaving on Monday.*

*She is starting next week.*

4. With *always* to express the idea that something happens too often and it annoys the speaker.

*I am always forgetting my keys.*

*He is always smoking in the living room!*

We do not normally use in the continuous the following groups of verbs (so called state verbs):

1. Of senses: *feel*, *hear*, *see*, *smell*, *taste*. On the other hand, *look*, *watch* or *listen* are action verbs and can be used in the continuous:

*I can hear you. - I am listening to you.*

*Can you see the bird? - Are you looking at the bird?*

2. Of liking and disliking: *like*, *love*, *hate*, *fear*, *detest*, *want*, *wish*...

*I like animals.*

*I hate snakes.*

3. Of mental states: *agree*, *believe*, *forget*, *know*, *remember*, *suppose*, *think*...

*I agree with you.*

*I suppose you are right.*

4. Of permanent states: *be, have, belong, contain, owe, own, possess...*

*This pen belongs to me.  
I have a new pet.*

5. Of appearance: *seem, appear, look, sound...*

*It seems that it will rain.  
Your new haircut looks really good.*

If some of these verbs are used in the present continuous, they have a different meaning. In such a case they become action verbs.

*I think he is my best friend. (mental state) - I'm thinking of giving him a present. (mental activity)  
He has a new bathroom. (possess) - He is having a bath. (take a bath)  
I see what you mean. (know) - I am seeing a doctor. I am ill. (visit)  
The flower smells beautiful. (scent) - The dog is smelling the sausage. (sniff)  
This wine tastes sour. (It has a sour taste.) - She is tasting the soup if it is warm enough.*