

# English grammar: Present simple and continuous tense

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## Present simple tense

### Form

Positive statement: *I play, He plays*

Negative statement: *I do not play (I don't play), He does not play (He doesn't play)*

Question: *Do you play? Does he play?*

Neg. question: *Do you not play? (Don't you play?) Does he not play? (Doesn't he play?)*

### Spelling

We only use -s ending (plays) in the third person singular.

We add -es to the verbs that end in ss, sh, ch, x and o: misses, finishes, watches, mixes, goes.

If the verb ends in a consonant and -y, we change -y into -i and use the -es ending: carry - carries, try - tries.

But: play - plays, because this verb ends with a vowel and -y.

The auxiliary verb *do* is not used to make questions and negative statements with modal verbs and the verb *to be*.

*Are you a student? Is he in London? I am not at home. He is not happy. Can you sing? Must I come? I cannot swim. He mustn't stay.*

If the *wh*-pronoun introducing the question (who, which) is the subject of the question, we do not use the auxiliary verb *do*.

*Who knows you? (who is the subject)*

*Which cars belong to you? (which cars is the subject)*

But: *Who do you know? (who is the object)*

The negative question normally expresses a surprise.

*Doesn't he work?*

### Use

1. We use the present simple tense for activities that happen again and again (everyday, sometimes, ever, never).

*I sometimes go to school by bike. You don't speak Greek. Do they get up early?*

*He often travels. She doesn't work. Does she ever help you?*

2. We use it for facts that are always true.

*Our planet moves round the sun. Lions eat meat.*

3. With a future time expression (tomorrow, next week) we use the present simple for planned future events (timetables).

*The train leaves at 8.15. They return tonight.*

## Present continuous tense

### 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?*

Neg. 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

1. We use the present continuous for an activity that is happening just now.

*I am learning English at the moment. You aren't listening! Why is he sitting here?*

2. We use it for an action happening about this time (today, this week), but not necessarily at the moment of speaking. It is a temporary activity.

I am in London. I am staying at the hotel. (But just now you can be somewhere else.)

She can't go out. She is writing her essay today. (But she can be having lunch at the moment.)

You can't borrow this book today. Mary is reading it. (But not right now.)

3. With a future time expression (soon, on Monday) we use the present continuous for definite arrangements in the near future. It is more personal than the present simple tense, because it expresses the speaker's plan.

I am leaving soon. We are meeting on Monday.