

Present Tenses in E4PS

Present Simple vs Present Continuous

PRESENT SIMPLE

A Form

This table shows the present simple of the verb *to work*.

Affirmative	Negative	Question
<i>I work</i>	<i>I do not (don't) work</i>	<i>Do I work?</i>
<i>You work</i>	<i>You do not (don't) work</i>	<i>Do you work?</i>
<i>He/she/it works</i>	<i>He/she/it does not (doesn't) work</i>	<i>Does he/she/it work?</i>
<i>We work</i>	<i>We do not (don't) work</i>	<i>Do we work?</i>
<i>They work</i>	<i>They do not (don't) work</i>	<i>Do they work?</i>

- (NOT He work in a bank.)
- (NOT He doesn't to work in a bank.)
- (NOT He doesn't works in a bank.)
- We use contractions (in brackets) in speech and informal writing.

USES

✧ talking about general facts:

John **lives** with his family and **studies** Political Science at UniTe.

Q: Where **do** you **live**?

A: I **live** in New York.

✧ talking about routines:

I generally **get** up early.

Q: How often **do** you **play** football?

A: I **play** football once a week.

✧ **talking about scientific facts, general truths and events that do not change:**

Stainless steel **contains** chromium.

Five times five **equals** twenty-five.

The sun **rises** at East.

✧ **talking about wants / needs / likes:**

Q: **Do** you **want** a receipt?

A: Yes, thanks.

✧ **talking about timetables:**

Q: When **does** your plane **leave**?

A: My plane **leaves** at 12:45 pm.

Classes **start** at 9:00 am.

✧ **facts known about the future such as scheduled events:**

April 25th **is** a national holiday.

PRESENT CONTINUOUS

Form

- We form the present continuous with the auxiliary verb *be* and the *-ing* form of the verb.

Affirmative	Negative	Question
<i>I am ('m) working</i>	<i>I am not ('m not) working</i>	<i>Am I working?</i>
<i>You are ('re) working</i>	<i>You are not (aren't) working</i>	<i>Are you working?</i>
<i>He/she/it is ('s) working</i>	<i>He/she/it is not (isn't) working</i>	<i>Is he/she/it working?</i>
<i>We are ('re) working</i>	<i>We are not (aren't) working</i>	<i>Are we working?</i>
<i>They are ('re) working</i>	<i>They are not (aren't) working</i>	<i>Are they working?</i>

- We use contractions (in brackets) in speech and informal writing.
- The negative has an alternative form: *you're not*, *he/she/it's not*, *we're not*, *they're not*.
- If a verb ends with the letter *-e*, we leave it out when we add *-ing*. So we write: *we are having* (NOT ~~haveing~~), *they are coming* (NOT ~~comeing~~), etc.
- Some verbs are not normally used in a continuous form. (See unit 3.)

USES

- ✧ **talking to describe activities in progress right now, at the time of speaking:**
 The network **is not working** – the ICT (Information and Communication Technology) department **are trying** to remove a virus.
- ✧ **talking to describe activities in progress now, but not at this exact moment:**
 I **am reading** a book about the life of Nelson Mandela.
- ✧ **talking to describe trends and developments in progress over a longer period of time:**
 The problem of global warming **is getting** worse.
 People **are living** longer and longer thanks to medical advances.
- ✧ **present plans for the future:**
 Q: When **are you leaving**?
 A: I **am leaving** Milan on Friday.

Present Simple

✧ **is used with frequency adverbs or expressions of time such as:**

always / often / sometimes / hardly ever / never / from time to time / most of the time

yearly / half yearly / quarterly / monthly / weekly / daily

every year / once a month / twice a week / three times a day

Present Continuous....

✧ **is used with adverbs or expressions of time such as:**

at the moment / at present / presently [\$] / currently / right now / nowadays / these days / this week

REMEMBER THAT:

✧ **There are a number of verbs that describe states. A 'state' is a condition, not an action. Such kinds of verb are used mainly in the present simple and include:**

- ✓ **thinking:** to agree / to believe / to doubt / to forget / to imagine / to know / to realise / to recognise / to regret / to remember / to suppose / to think / to understand;
- ✓ **liking and disliking:** to admire / to appreciate / to dislike / to hate/ to like / to love / to want / to wish;
- ✓ **possession:** to belong to / to contain / to have / to include / to own / to possess;
- ✓ **appearance:** to appear / to look like / to resemble / to seem / to sound;
- ✓ **being:** to be / to consist of / to depend on / to exist;
- ✓ **the senses:** to hear / to see / to smell / to taste;
- ✓ **miscellanea:** to cost / to involve / to matter / to mean / to measure / to weigh.

A Present simple or continuous?

- Here is a summary of units 1 and 2:

Present simple	Present continuous
- permanent situations <i>I work for a Russian oil company.</i>	- temporary situations <i>I'm working from home today.</i>
- habits and routines <i>We have a meeting every Monday.</i>	- current activity, in progress now <i>Ana is busy right now – she's having a meeting.</i>
- facts that don't change <i>We all get old one day.</i>	- developments and trends <i>The population of Japan is getting older.</i>

- Remember that the time adverb often controls the tense.
Present simple adverbs include: *usually, every week, most of the time*, etc.
Present continuous adverbs include: *at the moment, currently, right now*, etc.

Therefore, note that:

- ✧ **The present simple refers to an action / event which the speaker sees as a permanent situation – such as in:**
 - a) **an unlimited period:** e.g. Where **do you come** from?
 - b) **something always true:** e.g. Water **boils** at 100°C. / The River Thames **flows** through London.
 - c) **a general statement:** e.g. The journey **takes** about three hours.
- ✧ **The present continuous always refers to an action /event which the speaker sees as a temporary situation:**
e.g. I usually **drive** to work, but I **am walking** while the weather is so nice.
- ✧ **Sometimes both are possible with different meanings:**
I **work** in a news agency. VS I **am working** in a news agency.
Where **do you live**? VS Where **are you living**?
- ✧ **Sometimes the objective difference is very small:**
I **am not feeling** very well! VS I **do not feel** very well!

- ✧ A few state verbs, such as **be**, **have** and **think**, can have both an ‘action’ meaning (where a continuous form is possible) and a ‘state’ meaning (where it is not).

Our suppliers **are being** very difficult at the moment.

VS

Our suppliers **are** Italian.

I **am thinking** of investing my money.

VS

This year, I **think** I will invest my savings in stocks instead of bonds.

I **am having** problems with a foreign partner.

VS

I **have** a pencil collection in my office.