

UNIT **1** Present tenses

**Present simple (1)**

|             |   |  |
|-------------|---|--|
| <b>Form</b> | I / you / we / they <b>work</b> .<br>He / she / it <b>works</b> .<br>I / you / we / they <b>do not work</b> .<br>He / she / it <b>does not work</b> . | <b>Do I / you / we / they work?</b><br><b>Does he / she / it work?</b> |
|-------------|---|--|

**Uses**

- 1 Presenting factual information, e.g. about company activities**  
Our company **employs** over 100,000 people, **operates** in many overseas markets, and **offers** a wide-range of hi-tech products for the 21st century.
- 2 Actions and situations which are generally true**  
Imperial Tobacco **belongs to** the Hanson group.  
High taxation **discourages** investment.  
We **sell** our products into many markets.  
A good brand **guarantees** a certain level of quality to customers.  
British wines usually **have** a sweet taste.  
Competition **brings out** the best in products and the worst in people.
- 3 Verbs used only in the present simple**  
There are a number of verbs which are almost always used in the present simple and not with *-ing*. These verbs usually refer to:  
**mental states:** believe, doubt, forget, imagine, know, realise, recognise, regret, remember, suppose, think, understand  
**likes and dislikes:** admire, dislike, hate, like, love, want, wish  
**possession:** belong to, contain, have, include, own, possess  
**appearance:** appear, look like, resemble, seem  
**being:** be, consist of, depend, exist  
**perception:** hear, see, smell, taste
- 4 Saying how often you or other people do things**  
We usually use the present simple with frequency adverbs:  
I *never* **smoke** at work.  
He **plays** golf *every Sunday morning*.  
I *often* **take** files home at the weekend.  
When she **gets** to the office she *always* **checks** her e-mail first.

Present tenses

Present simple (2)

5 Asking for and giving directions and instructions

'How do I **get** to your office?'

'You **turn** left after the station, **cross** the bridge and it's the second building on your right.'

**Place** the CD in the drive and **click** on the icon.

6 Talking about timetables and scheduled events

The bus **leaves** at 8.35 tomorrow morning.

The exhibition **opens** on 25 January.

The legislation **comes** into force on 1 January.

These are seen as fixed and the speaker is unlikely to be able to influence them.

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7 Providing a summary or abstract at the beginning of a report

The first section of this report **provides** introductory comments, **focuses** on important new developments and **highlights** some of our operations outside the United States. The second section **analyses** the results for the group as a whole. The final two sections **address** our consolidated cash flows and financial condition. The report **concludes** by pointing out the need for further investment if the group is to continue its expansion policy.

8 Newspaper headlines

The use of the present simple creates a sense of dramatic impact.

Unilever sells coffee operations

Russia doubles tea import duties

**MARKETS TUMBLE  
AS INVESTORS  
TAKE PROFITS**

PepsiCo link with Suntory

Shortages force up food prices

BANK REGULATOR BLOCKS MERGER

9 Doing by saying

We use the present simple with certain verbs which say what their function is. When we say them we 'perform' the action. For example, saying 'I **promise** to meet you at the airport' is making a promise. Other examples include:

I **resign**!

I **apologise**.

I **declare** this meeting open.

I **demand** to see the manager.

I **admit** I was wrong.

I **advise** you to look again at our proposal.



## PRESENT CONTINUOUS (1)

**FORM** I am **working**.

You / We / They **are working**.

He / She / It **is working**.

I **am not working**.

You / We / They **are not working**.

He / She / It **is not working**.

**Am I working?**

**Are you / we / they working?**

**Is he / she / it working?**

### USES 1 Talking about an event in progress at the moment of speaking

'What **are you doing**?' 'I'm **trying** to find a file.'

I'm afraid Mr Bansall can't see you right now. He's **interviewing** someone.

**We also often use the continuous with verbs of movement when the action has just started:**

I'm **leaving**. Can you tell Rosemary I'll see her tomorrow?

'Can I speak to John?' 'Sorry, he's out. No, hold on, he's just **coming** down the corridor.'

### 2 Describing current situations and ongoing projects

The time reference is at and around 'now', before and after the situations referred to.  
But the situation may not be in progress literally at the exact moment of speaking.

We're **waiting** for permission to go ahead with the project.

Big Japanese companies **are thinking** again about uniform pay systems.

My boss **is dealing** with your enquiry but you won't get a rapid answer.



### 3 Describing temporary situations

When the present continuous is used in this way, the situation described will not last permanently.

They're **staying** at the Crillon Hotel until the end of the week.

He's **working** in Libya on a fixed-term contract.

They **are offering** a 20% discount for the duration of the trade fair.

## PRESENT CONTINUOUS (2)

### USES 4 Changing, developing situations

We use the present continuous to describe changes which have not yet finished:

The number of people using Facebook **is growing**.

The Amazon rainforest **is disappearing** at an alarming rate.

Consumers in the industrialised world **are becoming** increasingly concerned with healthy living.

### 5 Personal arrangements and plans

We use the present continuous to refer to future time when talking about arrangements and fixed plans made before the time of speaking. We often use a time expression unless we are sure that the other person knows we are talking about the future:

**I'm seeing** Mr Poorhassan next weekend.

**I'm taking** the client to the best restaurant in town.

She's got a new job so she's **leaving** the firm in October.

We also use the present continuous with verbs of movement to talk about actions which are just beginning:

It's 1 o'clock. **I'm going** to the canteen for lunch. **Are you coming?**

### 6 Talking about repeated actions

His daughter **is taking** driving lessons.

His wife **is** always **telling** him not to work so hard.

We **are** constantly **monitoring** our products for quality.

If we describe repeated situations using the present continuous with *always*, the situation is often unplanned. Compare:

I always **meet** Marilyn in the car park. (planned in advance)

**I'm** always **meeting** Marilyn in the car park. (by chance)

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