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 work	*I do not (don't) work*	*Do I work?*
You work	*You do not (don't) work*	*Do you work?*
He/she/it works	*He/she/it does not (doesn't) work*	*Does he/she/it work?*
We work	*We do not (don't) work*	*Do we work?*
They work	*They do not (don't) work*	*Do they work?*

- (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:**

Marta **lives** with her family and **studies** Political Science at UniTe.
Q: Where **do** you **live**?
A: I **live** in Barcelona**.**

✧ **talking about routines:**

I generally **get** up early.
Q: How often **do** you **play** football?
A: I **play** football once a week.

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- **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 **need** 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:**
  - December 8th **is** a national holiday.

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PRESENT CONTINUOUS

Form

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

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

- 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 Pope Francis.

✧ **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** Naples on Friday**.**

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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.

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A Present simple or continuous?

- Here is a summary of units 1 and 2:

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

- 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!

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✧ **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.

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