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A self-study
reference
and practice
book for
intermediate
students of
English

with answers

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Present continuous (I am doing)

A

Study this example situation:

Sarah is in her car. She is on her way to work.
She is **driving** to work.

This means: she is driving *now*, at the time of speaking.
The action is not finished.

Am/is/are + -ing is the *present continuous*:

I	am	(= I'm)	driving
he/she/it	is	(= he's etc.)	working
we/you/they	are	(= we're etc.)	doing etc.



B

I am doing something = I'm in the middle of doing it; I've started doing it and I haven't finished yet:

- ☐ Please don't make so much noise. **I'm trying** to work. (*not* I try)
- ☐ 'Where's Mark?' 'He's **having** a shower.' (*not* He has a shower)
- ☐ Let's go out now. It **isn't raining** any more. (*not* It doesn't rain)
- ☐ (*at a party*) Hello, Jane. **Are you enjoying** the party? (*not* Do you enjoy)
- ☐ What's all that noise? What's **going on**? (= What's happening?)

The action is not necessarily happening at the time of speaking. For example:

Steve is talking to a friend on the phone. He says:



I'm **reading** a really good book at the moment.
It's about a man who ...

Steve is not reading the book at the time of speaking.
He means that he has started it, but has not finished it yet.
He is in the middle of reading it.

Some more examples:

- ☐ Kate wants to work in Italy, so she's **learning** Italian. (*but* perhaps she isn't learning Italian at the time of speaking)
- ☐ Some friends of mine **are building** their own house. They hope to finish it next summer.

C

You can use the present continuous with **today / this week / this year** etc. (periods around now):

- ☐ A: You're **working** hard **today**. (*not* You work hard today)
- B: Yes, I have a lot to do.
- ☐ The company I work for **isn't doing** so well **this year**.

D

We use the present continuous when we talk about changes happening around now, especially with these verbs:

get change become increase rise fall grow improve begin start

- ☐ Is your English **getting** better? (*not* Does your English get better)
- ☐ The population of the world **is increasing** very fast. (*not* increases)
- ☐ At first I didn't like my job, but I'm **beginning** to enjoy it now. (*not* I begin)

1.1 Complete the sentences with the following verbs in the correct form:

get happen look lose make start stay try ~~work~~

- 1 'You 're working hard today.' 'Yes, I have a lot to do.'
- 2 I for Christine. Do you know where she is?
- 3 It dark. Shall I turn on the light?
- 4 They don't have anywhere to live at the moment. They with friends until they find somewhere.
- 5 Things are not so good at work. The company money.
- 6 Have you got an umbrella? It to rain.
- 7 You a lot of noise. Can you be quieter? I to concentrate.
- 8 Why are all these people here? What ?

1.2 Put the verb into the correct form. Sometimes you need the negative (I'm not doing etc.).

- 1 Please don't make so much noise. I 'm trying (try) to work.
- 2 Let's go out now. It isn't raining (rain) any more.
- 3 You can turn off the radio. I (listen) to it.
- 4 Kate phoned me last night. She's on holiday in France. She (have) a great time and doesn't want to come back.
- 5 I want to lose weight, so this week I (eat) lunch.
- 6 Andrew has just started evening classes. He (learn) German.
- 7 Paul and Sally have had an argument. They (speak) to each other.
- 8 I (get) tired. I need a rest.
- 9 Tim (work) this week. He's on holiday.

1.3 Complete the conversations.

- 1 A: I saw Brian a few days ago.
B: Oh, did you? What's he doing these days? (what / he / do)
A: He's at university.
B: ? (what / he / study)
A: Psychology.
B: it? (he / enjoy)
A: Yes, he says it's a very good course.
- 2 A: Hi, Liz. How in your new job? (you / get on)
B: Not bad. It wasn't so good at first, but better now. (things / get)
A: What about Jonathan? Is he OK?
B: Yes, but his work at the moment. (he / not / enjoy)
He's been in the same job for a long time and to get bored with it. (he / begin)

1.4 Complete the sentences using the following verbs:

begin change get ~~increase~~ rise

- 1 The population of the world is increasing very fast.
- 2 The world Things never stay the same.
- 3 The situation is already bad and it worse.
- 4 The cost of living Every year things are more expensive.
- 5 The weather to improve. The rain has stopped, and the wind isn't as strong.