Present continuous (I am doing)

A Study this example situation:

Sarah is in her car. She is on her way to work.
She’s driving to work. (= She is driving …)

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

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c}
\text{am/is/are} & \text{doing} \\
\hline
\text{I am} & \text{I’m} \\
\text{he/she/it is} & \text{he’s etc.} \\
\text{we/you/they are} & \text{we’re etc.}
\end{array}
\]

B I am doing something = I started doing it and I haven’t finished; I’m in the middle of doing it.

- 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)
- How’s your new job? Are you enjoying it?
- What’s all that noise? What’s going on? or What’s happening?

Sometimes the action is not 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 says ‘I’m reading …’ but he is not reading the book at the time of speaking.
He means that he has started reading the book, 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 a change that has started to happen. We often use these verbs in this way:

- getting, becoming
- changing, improving
- starting, beginning
- increasing, rising, falling, growing

- 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 starting to enjoy it now. (not I start)
Exercises

1.1 What’s happening in the pictures? Choose from these verbs:

cross  hide  scratch  take  tie  wave

1. She’s taking a picture.
2. He’s ______ a shoelace.
3. ____________________________ the road.
4. ____________________________ his head.
5. ____________________________ behind a tree.
6. ____________________________ to somebody.

1.2 The sentences on the right follow those on the left. Which sentence goes with which?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Left</th>
<th>Right</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Please don’t make so much noise.</td>
<td>a. I’m getting hungry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. We need to leave soon.</td>
<td>b. They’re lying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I don’t have anywhere to live right now.</td>
<td>c. It’s starting to rain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I need to eat something soon.</td>
<td>d. They’re trying to sell it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. They don’t need their car any more.</td>
<td>e. It’s getting late.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Things are not so good at work.</td>
<td>f. I’m trying to work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. It isn’t true what they say.</td>
<td>g. I’m staying with friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. We’re going to get wet.</td>
<td>h. The company is losing money.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3 Write questions. Use the present continuous.

1. What’s all that noise? ________________________________________? (what / happen?)
2. What’s the matter? ___________________________________________? (why / you / cry?)
3. Where’s your mother? _________________________________________? (she / work / today?)
4. I haven’t seen you for ages. _________________________________? (what / you / do / these days?)
5. Amy is a student. ____________________________________________? (what / she / study?)
6. Who are those people? _______________________________________? (what / they / do?)
7. I heard you started a new job. _________________________________? (you / enjoy / it?)
8. We’re not in a hurry. _________________________________________? (why / you / walk / so fast?)

1.4 Put the verb into the correct form, positive (I’m doing etc.) or negative (I’m not doing etc.).

1. Please don’t make so much noise. __________________________________ (I / try) to work.
2. Let’s go out now. ____________________________________________ (it / rain) any more.
3. You can turn off the radio. ____________________________________ (I / listen) to it.
4. Kate phoned last night. She’s on holiday with friends. __________ (She / have) a great time and doesn’t want to come back.
5. Andrew started evening classes recently. __________________________ (He / learn) Japanese.
6. Paul and Sarah have had an argument and now ____________________ (they / speak) to one another.
7. The situation is already very bad and now ________________________ (it / get) worse.
8. Tim ____________________ (work) today. He’s taken the day off.
9. ________________________ (I / look) for Sophie. Do you know where she is?
10. The washing machine has been repaired. _________________________ (it / work) now.
11. ________________________ (They / build) a new hospital. It will be finished next year.
12. Ben is a student, but he’s not very happy. ____________________ (He / enjoy) his course.
13. ________________________ (The weather / change). Look at those clouds.
14. Dan has been in the same job for a long time. _________________ (He / start) to get bored with it.
A

Study this example situation:

Alex is a bus driver, but now he is in bed asleep. He is not driving a bus. (He is asleep.)

*but* He **drives** a bus. He is a bus driver.

*drive(s), work(s), do(es)* etc. is the **present simple**:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I/we/you/they</th>
<th>drive</th>
<th>work</th>
<th>do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>he/she/it</td>
<td>drives</td>
<td>works</td>
<td>does</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For spelling (-s or -es), see Appendix 6.

B

We use the present simple to talk about things in general. We use it to say that something happens all the time or repeatedly, or that something is true in general:

- Nurses **look** after patients in hospitals.
- I usually **go** away at weekends.
- The earth **goes** round the sun.
- The cafe **opens** at 7.30 in the morning.

We say:

- I **work**
- you **go**
- he/she/it **does**
- but
- he/she/it **works**
- they **teach**
- my sister **teaches**
- I have **but**
- has

For spelling (-s or -es), see Appendix 6.

C

We use *do*/*does* to make questions and negative sentences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>do</th>
<th>does</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I/we/you/they</td>
<td>drive? do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he/she/it</td>
<td>work?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- I come from Canada. Where **do** you **come** from?
- I **don’t go** away very often.
- What **does** this word **mean**? (not What means this word?)
- Rice **doesn’t grow** in cold climates.

In the following examples, **do** is also the main verb (do you **do** / doesn’t do etc.):

- ‘**What do you do**?’ ‘I work in a shop.’
- He’s always so lazy. He **doesn’t do** anything to help.

D

We use the present simple to say how often we do things:

- I **get** up at 8 o’clock **every morning**.
- How often **do** you **go** to the dentist?
- Julie **doesn’t drink** tea very often.
- Robert usually **goes away** two or three times a year.

E

I promise / I apologise etc.

Sometimes we do things by saying something. For example, when you promise to do something, you can say ‘**I promise** …’; when you suggest something, you can say ‘**I suggest** …’:

- I **promise** I won’t be late. (not I’m promising)
- ‘What do you **suggest** I do?’ ‘I **suggest** that you …’

In the same way we say: I apologise … / I advise … / I insist … / I agree … / I refuse … etc.
Exercises

2.1 Complete the sentences using the following verbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb(s)</th>
<th>cause(s)</th>
<th>close(s)</th>
<th>connect(s)</th>
<th>go(es)</th>
<th>live(s)</th>
<th>speak(s)</th>
<th>take(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tanya</td>
<td>speaks</td>
<td>German very well.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben and Jack</td>
<td>be with</td>
<td>to the same school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad driving</td>
<td>lead to</td>
<td>many accidents.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The museum</td>
<td>go to</td>
<td>at 4 o’clock on Sundays.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents</td>
<td>live in</td>
<td>a very small flat.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Olympic Games</td>
<td>start</td>
<td>place every four years.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Panama Canal</td>
<td>connect</td>
<td>the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2 Put the verb into the correct form.

1. Julia ____________________________________________________________ (not / drink) tea very often.
2. What time ____________________________________________ (the banks / close) here?
3. I have a car, but I ____________________________________________ (not / use) it much.
4. Where __________________________________________________________ (Maria / come) from? Is she Spanish?
5. ‘What _______________________________________________ (you / do)? ‘I’m an electrician.’
6. Look at this sentence. What ___________________________________________ (this word / mean)?
7. David isn’t very fit. He ____________________________________________ (not / do) any sport.
8. It ____________________________________________ (take) me an hour to get to work in the morning. How long ____________________________________________ (it / take) you?

2.3 Complete the sentences using these verbs. Sometimes you need the negative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb(s)</th>
<th>believe</th>
<th>eat</th>
<th>flow</th>
<th>go</th>
<th>grow</th>
<th>make</th>
<th>rise</th>
<th>tell</th>
<th>translate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The earth</td>
<td>go</td>
<td>round the sun.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>grow</td>
<td>in cold climates.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sun</td>
<td>come</td>
<td>in the east.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bees</td>
<td>produce</td>
<td>honey.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetarians</td>
<td>avoid</td>
<td>meat.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An atheist</td>
<td>deny</td>
<td>in God.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An interpreter</td>
<td>translate</td>
<td>from one language into another.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liars are</td>
<td>speak</td>
<td>the truth.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The River</td>
<td>connect</td>
<td>into the Atlantic Ocean.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.4 You ask Lisa questions about herself and her family. Write the questions.

1. You know that Lisa plays tennis. You want to know how often. Ask her. How often ____________________________________________ (do / you / play / tennis)?
2. Perhaps Lisa’s sister plays tennis too. You want to know. Ask Lisa. ____________________________________________ (your sister / play / tennis)?
3. You know that Lisa goes to the cinema a lot. You want to know how often. Ask her. ____________________________________________ (she / go / cinema)?
4. You know that Lisa’s brother works. You want to know what he does. Ask Lisa. ____________________________________________ (he / work / what)?
5. You’re not sure whether Lisa speaks Spanish. You want to know. Ask her. ____________________________________________ (she / speak / Spanish)?
6. You don’t know where Lisa’s grandparents live. You want to know. Ask Lisa. ____________________________________________ (she / where / live / grandmother)?

2.5 Complete using the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb(s)</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>apologise</th>
<th>insist</th>
<th>promise</th>
<th>recommend</th>
<th>suggest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Mr Evans is not in the office today. ____________________________________________ (I / suggest) you try calling him tomorrow.
| I won’t tell anybody what you said. ____________________________________________ .
| (in a restaurant) You must let me pay for the meal. ____________________________________________ .
| ____________________________________________ for what I said. I shouldn’t have said it.
| The new restaurant in Baker Street is very good. ____________________________________________ .
| I think you’re absolutely right. ____________________________________________ with you.
How long have you (been) … ?  Unit 11

A

Present continuous and present simple 1

(I am doing and I do)

Compare:

**present continuous (I am doing)**

We use the continuous for things happening at or around the time of speaking. The action is not complete.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>past</th>
<th>now</th>
<th>future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>I am doing</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The water is boiling. Be careful.
- Listen to those people. What language are they speaking?
- Let’s go out. It isn’t raining now.
- I’m busy. ’What are you doing?"
- I’m getting hungry. Let’s go and eat.
- Kate wants to work in Italy, so she’s learning Italian.
- The population of the world is increasing very fast.

We use the continuous for temporary situations (things that continue for a short time):

- I’m living with some friends until I find a place of my own.
- A: You’re working hard today.  B: Yes, I have a lot to do.

See Unit 1 for more information.

**present simple (I do)**

We use the simple for things in general or things that happen repeatedly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>past</th>
<th>now</th>
<th>future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>I do</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Water boils at 100 degrees Celsius.
- Excuse me, do you speak English?
- It doesn’t rain very much in summer.
- What do you usually do at weekends?
- I always get hungry. Let’s go and eat.
- Most people learn to swim when they are children.
- Every day the population of the world increases by about 200,000 people.

We use the simple for permanent situations (things that continue for a long time):

- My parents live in London. They have lived there all their lives.
- Joe isn’t lazy. He works hard most of the time.

See Unit 2 for more information.

B

I always do and I’m always doing

I always do something = I do it every time.

- I always go to work by car. (not I’m always going)

I’m always doing something = I do it too often or more often than normal. For example:

- I’ve lost my keys again. I’m always losing them.

I’m always losing them = I lose them too often, or more often than normal.

- Paul is never satisfied. He’s always complaining. (= he complains too much)
- You’re always looking at your phone. Don’t you have anything else to do?
Exercises

3.1 Are the underlined verbs OK? Correct them where necessary.

1 Water **boils** at 100 degrees Celsius.
2 **How often are you going** to the cinema?
3 Ben **tries** to find a job, but he hasn't had any luck yet.
4 Martina is **phoning** her mother every day.
5 The moon **goes** round the earth in about 27 days.
6 Can you hear those people? **What do they talk** about?
7 What **do you do** in your spare time?
8 Sarah is a vegetarian. She doesn't **eat** meat.
9 I must go now. It **gets** late.
10 'Come on! It's time to leave.' 'OK, I come.'
11 Paul is never late. He's **always** starting work on time.
12 They don't get on well. They're **always** arguing.

3.2 Put the verb into the correct form, present continuous or present simple.

1 a) ...I usually get ... hungry in the afternoon.
   b) I'm getting ... hungry. Let's go and eat something.

2 a) ‘______________ (you / listen) to the radio?’ ‘No, you can turn it off.’
   b) ‘______________ (you / listen) to the radio a lot?’ ‘No, not very often.’

3 a) The River Nile ______________________ (flow) into the Mediterranean.
   b) The river ______________________ (flow) very fast today – much faster than usual.

4 a) I'm not very active. ______________________ (I / not / do) any sport.
   b) What ______________________ (you / usually / do) at weekends?

5 a) Rachel is in New York right now. ______________________ (She / stay) at the Park Hotel.
   b) ______________________ (She / always / stay) there when she's in New York.

3.3 Put the verb into the correct form, present continuous or present simple.

1 Why are all these people here? ______________________ (What / happen)?
2 Julia is good at languages. ______________________ (She / speak) four languages very well.
3 Are you ready yet? ______________________ (Everybody / wait) for you.
4 I've never heard this word. How ______________________ (you / pronounce) it?
5 Kate ______________________ (not / work) this week. She's on holiday.
6 I think my English ______________________ (improve) slowly. It's better than it was.
7 Nicola ______________________ (live) in Manchester. She has never lived anywhere else.
8 Can we stop walking soon? ______________________ (I / start) to get tired.
9 Sam and Tina are in Madrid right now. ______________________ (They / visit) a friend of theirs.
10 'What ______________________ (your father / do)?' 'He's an architect.'
11 It took me an hour to get to work this morning. Most days ______________________ (it / not / take) so long.
12 I ______________________ (I / learn) to drive. My driving test is next month. My father ______________________ (teach) me.

3.4 Finish B's sentences. Use **always -ing**.

1 a) I've lost my keys again.
   b) Not again! ______________________ (You're / always / losing your keys)

2 a) The car has broken down again.
   b) That car is useless. It ______________________

3 a) Look! You've made the same mistake again.
   b) Oh no, not again! I ______________________

4 a) Oh, I've left my phone at home again.
   b) Typical! ______________________