

II- Present Continuous

The present continuous is used in the following cases :

1- To describe something that is happening now

Now (I am standing)

Past Future

e.g. I'm standing outside the Theatre Royal right now.

I'm talking to you, the fans are gathering in front of the theatre.

2- To describe something that is happening these days, even if it is not happening right now.

e.g. I'm studying literature this term.

A horizontal timeline with an arrow pointing to the right. The word 'Past' is at the left end, 'Now' is in the middle above the line, and 'Future' is at the right end.

Present Continuous Versus Present Simple

1-Use the present continuous for things that are happening now.

Timeline diagram illustrating the present moment:

- A horizontal line represents time, with an arrow pointing to the right.
- The line is labeled "Past" on the left and "Future" on the right.
- A point on the line is marked with a vertical tick and labeled "Now".
- An arrow points from the text "He is talking to Taro" to the "Now" point.

Use the present simple to describe what happens regularly.

Timeline diagram showing the progression of time from Past to Future. The timeline is marked with ticks, and the word "Now" is placed above the central tick. Below the central tick, an arrow points to it with the text "He talks to him everyday".

2- Use the Present continuous for things happening these days.

Past Now Future

We are studying

e.g. Laura is studying in France this year.

Are you studying hard these days?

Note: Most stative verbs are not usually used in the present continuous even when they describe a situation that exists at the moment of speaking.

e.g. Jane wants to go home right now. **But not:** Jane is wanting to go home right now.

Common stative verbs:

Emotions	Mental states	Wants and preferences	Perception and the senses	Appearance and value	Possession and relation
Admire Adore Appreciate Detest Envy Fear Hate Love Regret	agree assume believe consider mean estimate find feel (believe) guess imagine suppose	Hope Need Prefer Want Wish	Feel Hear Notice Observe perceive See Smell Taste	appear cost equal look represent seem sound signify weigh be	belong contain have own possess

Exercise1: IDENTIFY. Read this conversation. Underline all the stative verbs that describe a situation that is in progress. Circle all the stative verbs that describe a situation that is generally true.

Anna: This steak tastes delicious. Your salmon looks good, too.

Ben: Here, I'm putting some on your plate. I think you'll like it.

Anna: Mmm. I do like it! Funny, I usually don't like fish.

Ben: Red has that effect on people.

Anna: I have no idea what you're talking about. What do you mean?

Ben: Well colours can change the way we feel. For example, people often feel hungrier in a red room. I notice that you're looking at the red wallpaper.

Anna: And I certainly feel hungry. I'm eating half your salmon.

Ben: That's OK. I'm tasting your steak. It's delicious.

Exercise2: CHOOSE. Complete this magazine article with the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

John Bints is in a sports shop. The flowers 1.(smell / are smelling) nice but he isn't really paying attention to the scent because he 2. (looks / is looking) at a pair of running shoes. They 3. (cost / are costing) a lot more than he usually pays but John really, really 4 (wants / is wanting) those shoes. He's the victim of 'smart scents', aromas that shops use to make customers buy more.

The other side of the town, John's daughter Myra is doing a history test in a classroom that was recently painted yellow. Although Myra 5. (hates / is hating) history, she 6. (seems / is seeming) to be doing well in this test. She 7.(likes / is liking) the new colour of her classroom. She 8. (doesn't suspect / isn't suspecting) that it's helping her with the test, but it is. Scientists have shown that yellow improves both memory and concentration.

We now 9. (know / are knowing) that smells, colours and sounds affect our moods and even our health. In fact, right now John's wife, Cindy 10.(thinks / is thinking) about John and Myra. She's sure that is spending too much shoes and Myra is failing another history test. Cindy suffers from migraines but she 11. (hasn't got / isn't having) a headache today. She's in the garden and she 12. (listen / is listening) to bird and insect sounds. They always calm her down.

Exercise3: EDIT. Read this diary entry. There are eight mistakes in the use of active and stative verbs. Find and correct them.

16 March

Not a good day! I feel depressed and I've got a headache. I'm needing to do something to change my mood and get rid of this pain. Last week, I'm reading an article about how smells can affect mood and even health, so at the moment I smell an orange (for the depression) and a green apple (for the headache). They smell nice but I'm not thinking that I notice a difference in how I feel! I think I'm preferring to eat something when I feel down. But I worry that I'm weighing too much. So, at the moment I have a cup of peppermint tea with lemon. The article says that the peppermint smell helps you eat less. Well, I don't know about that! A chocolate ice cream sounds pretty good right now! It's seeming that there are no easy solutions.

Exercise4: Complete the sentences with one of the following verbs in the correct form:

come get happen look make start stay try work

'You're working hard today.' 'Yes, I have a lot to do.'

1- I _____ for Christine. Do you know where she is?

2- It _____ dark. Shall I turn on the light?

3- They haven't got anywhere to live at the moment. They _____ with friends until they find somewhere.

4- 'Are you ready, Ann?' 'Yes, I _____.'

5- Have you got an umbrella? It _____ to rain.

6- You _____ a lot of noise. Could you be quieter? I _____ to concentrate.

7- Why are all these people here? What _____ ?

Exercise5: Use the words in brackets to complete the questions.

1- 'Is Colin working this week? 'No, he's on holiday.' (Colin/work)

2- Why _____ at me like that? What's the matter? (you/look)

3- 'Jenny is a student at university.' 'Is she? What _____ ?'

4- _____ to the radio or can I turn it off? (anybody/listen)

5- How is your English? _____ better? (it/get)

Exercise6: Put the verb into the correct form. Sometimes you need the negative (I'm not doing etc.)

1- I'm tired. I'm going (go) to bed now. Goodnight!

2- We can go out now. It isn't raining (rain) anymore.

3- 'How is your new job?' 'Not so good at the moment. I _____ (enjoy) it very much.'

4- Catherine phoned me last night. She is 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- Angela has just started evening classes. She _____ (learn) German.

7- I think Paul and Ann have had an argument. They _____ (speak) to each other.

Exercise7: Read this conversation between Brian and Sarah. Put the verbs into the correct form.

Sarah: Brian ! How nice to see you ! What _____ (you/do) these days?

Brian: I _____ (train) to be a supermarket manager.

Sarah: Really? What's it like? _____ (you/enjoy) it?

Brian: It's all right. What about you?

Sarah: Well, actually I _____ (not /work) at the moment.

I _____ (try) to find a job but it's not easy.

But I'm very busy. I _____ (decorate) my flat.

Brian: _____ (you/do) it alone?

Sarah: No, some friends of mine _____ (help) me.

Exercise8: Complete the sentences using one of these verbs: get change rise fall increase

You don't have to use all the verbs and you can use a verb more than once.

1-The population of the world is rising very fast.

2-Ken is still ill but he _____ better slowly.

3- The world _____. Things never stay the same.

4- The cost of living _____. Every year things are more expensive.

5- The economic situation is already very bad and it _____ worse.