



A1 Present Continuous Explanations

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Verb+ing Spelling Changes

Normally, it's very easy to make the verb+ing form. We add 'ing' to the infinitive.

- be → being
- sleep → sleeping

When the verb ends with 'e', we usually drop the 'e' before we add 'ing'. There are many, many verbs like this.

- share → sharing
- smile → smiling
- phone → phoning
- use → using
- wake → waking
- write → writing
- serve → serving
- realise → realising
- practise → practising
- move → moving
- live → living
- ignore → ignoring
- invite → inviting
- imagine → imagining
- give → giving
- smoke → smoking
- save → saving
- make → making
- have → having
- take → taking
- arrive → arriving

Sometimes we have to double the last consonant.

- swim → swimming
- run → running
- begin → beginning
- fit → fitting
- forget → forgetting
- get → getting
- hit → hitting
- let → letting
- plan → planning
- prefer → preferring
- put → putting
- set → setting
- sit → sitting
- shut → shutting
- stop → stopping
- travel → travelling
- win → winning

When the verb ends in -ie, we change -ie to -y before we add -ing.

- die → dying
- lie → lying



Present Continuous Forms

The present continuous (sometimes called the present progressive) tense in English is really easy to make and is the same for all verbs. We make it using the present simple of 'be' + verb+ing:

Here is how we make the positive.

- I am sleeping.
- You are playing.
- He is reading.
- She is working.
- It is raining.
- We are cooking.
- They are listening.

We can make the negative by adding 'not'.

- I am not sleeping.
- You are not playing.
- He is not reading.
- She is not working.
- It is not raining.
- We are not cooking.
- They are not listening.

To make 'yes / no' questions, we simply move 'am', 'is', or 'are' before the subject.

- Am I eating chocolate?
- Are you studying now?
- Is he working?
- Is she doing her homework?
- Is it raining?



- Are we meeting at six?
- Are they coming?

For 'wh' questions, put the question word at the front, then 'am / is / are', then the subject.

- Why am I eating chocolate?
- What are you studying now?
- When is he working?
- What is she doing?
- Why is it raining?
- Who are we meeting?
- How are they travelling?



Present Continuous Short Forms

To make the short forms of the present continuous, we do the same thing as we do for the simple present tense of 'be'.

- am → 'm
- is → 's
- are → 're

Positive Short Form

- I'm sleeping.
- You're reading.
- He's working.
- She's eating.
- It's raining.
- We're walking.
- They're talking.

For the negative short form, there are two possibilities (though 'I' only has one possibility). It doesn't matter which one you choose.

- I'm not sleeping.
- You're not playing / you aren't playing.
- He's not reading / he isn't reading.
- She's not working / she isn't working.
- It's not raining / it isn't raining.
- We're not cooking / we aren't cooking.
- They're not listening / they aren't listening.



When the subject is not a pronoun, we usually use ‘aren’t / isn’t’ and not ‘s not’ / ‘r not’.

- The children aren’t watching TV.
- Amanda isn’t coming later.



Stative Verbs

There are some verbs that we don't use in continuous tenses (like the present continuous). These are called state, non-continuous or stative verbs.

These verbs often describe states that last for some time, but it's not always possible to know from the meaning if a verb is stative. We need to learn them.

A verb that isn't stative is called a dynamic verb.

Here are some verbs that are usually stative. When we're using these verbs to talk about the present, we need to use the present simple even in situations where normally we use the present continuous.

- be I am here now. (NOT: I am being here now.)
- have She doesn't have a car. (NOT: She isn't having a car.)
- like Do you like chocolate? (NOT: Are you liking chocolate?)
- love I love my children. (NOT: I am loving my children.)
- know He knows Julia. (NOT: He is knowing Julia.)
- hate They hate exams. (NOT: They are hating exams.)
- dislike He dislikes cats. (NOT: He is disliking cats.)
- want I don't want a cup of coffee. (NOT: I'm not wanting a cup of coffee.)
- need We need something to eat. (NOT: We are needing something to eat.)
- understand He doesn't understand the lesson. (NOT: He isn't understanding the lesson.)
- belong Who does that bag belong to? (NOT: Who is that bag belonging to?)
- mean What does this word mean? (NOT: What is this word meaning?)

In modern, very informal English, you might sometimes hear some of these verbs in the present continuous, especially 'like' and 'love' when the speaker wants to emphasise that the feeling is happening now. This is not usually correct in written English.



Present Continuous Use: Events in Progress

We use the present continuous for things that are happening at the moment of speaking. These things usually last for quite a short time and they are not finished when we are talking about them.

- I'm working at the moment.
- Please call back as we are eating dinner now.
- Julie is sleeping.

We often use expressions like 'now' and 'at the moment' with this use of the present continuous.

We can't use stative verbs with the present continuous. If we want to talk about something that's happening now with a stative verb, we need to use the present simple.

- I am at home at the moment. (NOT: ~~I am being at home at the moment.~~)



Present Simple or Present Continuous?

We use both the present simple and the present continuous to talk about the present.

We often use the present simple for habits or things we do regularly.

- I drink coffee every morning.
- She works as a teacher.
- We meet often.

We often use the present continuous for things that are in progress now.

- I'm drinking coffee now.
- They are working at the moment.
- She is meeting her friend just now.

We use the present simple for things that are in progress now when the verb is a stative verb.

- I understand you now (NOT: I am understanding you).
- She likes tennis at the moment (NOT: She is liking tennis).