

Simple Present Vs. Present Progressive

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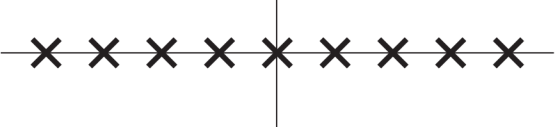

Grammar Notes

SIMPLE PRESENT VS. PRESENT PROGRESSIVE

A. Comparison Chart

There are two ways to show present time in English.

Use the **simple present** for repeated actions (actions that happen over and over). Use the **present progressive** (also called *present continuous*) for continuing actions (actions that are happening now).

	Simple Present	Present Progressive
Pattern	base verb (+ -s) (ends in -s for <i>he, she, it</i> , singular count nouns, and non-count nouns)	Be + <i>-ing</i> verb (forms of <i>Be</i> : <i>am, are, is</i>)
Use	repeated action	continuing action
Diagram		
Time Markers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • every (every day, every week, every month, every year, etc.) • once, twice, three times, etc. (once a week, twice a month, five times a year, etc.) • adverbs of frequency (always, almost always, often, usually, sometimes, never, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • now • right now • these days • nowadays • today • at the moment • at this time • currently • presently
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My son always brushes his teeth. • They walk their dog every day. • I don't call my parents very often. • Do you usually study after school? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The students are reading now. • At the moment, the boss is talking. • He isn't doing his homework. • Are you listening to me?

Grammar Notes cont.

B. Non-Action Verbs

Most English verbs involve an action (movement), but there are some verbs that have **no movement**. They are called **non-action** (or *stative*) verbs. Non-action verbs almost never take an *-ing* form.

Common non-action verbs can be grouped into five categories.

Categories	Examples
state	be, seem, appear, exist
possession	have, own, possess
feelings & needs	like, love, hate, feel, want, need, prefer, wish
thought	think, believe, know, imagine, understand
the senses	see, hear, taste, smell

Use the simple present with non-action verbs.
Do not use the present progressive.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ✓ I am a student. | ✓ My sister wants a new car. |
| ✗ I am being a student. | ✗ My sister is wanting a new car. |
| ✓ He has a dog. | ✓ I think that winter is the best season. |
| ✗ He is having a dog. | ✗ I am thinking that winter is the best season. |
| ✓ The children like pizza. | ✓ I see a stain on my shirt. |
| ✗ The children are liking pizza. | ✗ I am seeing a stain on my shirt. |

Grammar Notes cont.

C. Notes

Note #1

The simple present is also used for true facts and schedules.

- The earth's temperature **increases** every year. (*true fact*)
- Most plants **grow** in the spring and summer. (*true fact*)
- The bus **leaves** at 5:00 am tomorrow morning. (*schedule*)
- My favorite TV show **starts** at 8:00 pm. (*schedule*)

Note #2

The present progressive can have a future meaning.
It is commonly used for the *near future* (actions that will happen soon).

- I **am going** to Australia next weekend.
- My friend **is moving** on Friday.
- The students **are graduating** in three days.
- We **are seeing** a movie tonight.*

*For movies and plays at a theater, it is common to use the non-action verb *see* instead of the action verb *watch* for future time.

Note #3

Some non-action verbs can take an *-ing* form,
but the meaning of the verb usually changes.

- I **am having** pizza for dinner. (*having = eating*)
- We **are having** fun. (*having = experiencing*)
- My sister **is having** a baby. (*having = giving birth to*)
- **Are you seeing** anyone? (*seeing = dating*)
- I **am thinking** of buying a new car. (*thinking = deciding, planning*)

Exercise 1

COMPARING TENSES

Complete the following sentences using the simple present or the present progressive tense.

Ex. My team usually practices in the gym, but now we are practicing outside.
(practice) (practice)

1. They usually _____ the local newspaper,
(read)
but they _____ a national newspaper at the moment.
(read)
2. I _____ eggs for breakfast today, though I usually _____ cereal.
(eat) (eat)
3. David always _____ to work, and he _____ in the rain at this time.
(walk) (walk)
4. I _____ a shower now, though I normally _____ a bath.
(take) (take)
5. Isabella _____ English every day. She _____ past tense verbs right now.
(study) (study)
6. Sayid never _____ a tie to work,
(wear)
but he _____ one today because he has an important appointment.
(wear)
7. Jin sometimes _____ work late,
(leave)
but he _____ early today because it is his wife's birthday.
(leave)
8. We always _____ at A&B Market,
(shop)
and right now we _____ for food for a party.
(shop)
9. Lee _____ a cake for his wife's birthday,
(make)
but he almost never _____ cakes.
(make)
10. Fred and Rita never _____ wine, so they _____ water right now.
(drink) (drink)

Exercise 2

TIME MARKERS

Complete the following sentences using the simple present or the present progressive tense.

Ex. He goes to the gym three times a week.
(go)

1. Jack never _____ to class on time.
(get)
2. The sun always _____ in the east and _____ in the west.
(rise) (set)
3. Maya _____ TV now. She often _____ TV in the evenings.
(watch) (watch)
4. Mr. Duncan _____ to New York on business very often.
(travel, not)
5. My aunt usually _____ in a hotel when she comes to town, but tonight she _____ with us.
(stay) (stay)
6. At this time, they _____ in Europe.
(travel)
7. We _____ for coffee on Saturdays. We _____ on Sundays.
(meet, not) (meet)
8. She sometimes _____ jeans to school, but today she _____ a skirt.
(wear) (wear)
9. Right now, we _____ verb tenses.
(review)
10. My husband _____ dinner at the moment. He _____ the dishes.
(make, not) (wash)

Exercise 3

ACTION & NON-ACTION VERBS

Complete the following sentences using the simple present or the present progressive tense. Remember that non-action verbs don't usually take the progressive form.

Ex. Mi Jin is reading a new book now. She wants to finish the book tonight.
(read) (want)

1. Billy has a bad cold today. He is lying in bed at the moment.
(have) (lie)

2. Sara is at the park now. She is walking her dog.
(walk)
 She loves her dog so much.
(love)

3. I am going to the store to buy a new computer.
(go)
 The computer costs \$1500.
(cost)

4. Yuka hates her old, green dress, but she is wearing it today because her mother likes it.
(hate) (wear) (like)

5. Lucas has a new car. He loves to drive it around.
(have) (love)

6. Juan and Mohammed are jogging in the park right now.
(jog)
 A cat is following them. I think the cat belongs to Juan.
(follow) (think) (belong)



Exercise 3 cont.

7. What's that noise? I _____ something outside the window.
(hear)

I _____ scared!
(be)

8. My brother and I _____ at home. We _____ a movie on TV.
(be) (watch)

9. Marco usually _____ to work, but today
(drive)

he _____ a bus because his car _____ a flat tire.
(take) (have)

10. Slow down! You _____ too fast right now,
(drive)

and I _____ a police car up ahead.
(see)

Exercise 5

FIND SOMEONE WHO

Write questions in the simple present or present progressive tense.
 Then walk around the classroom and ask your classmates questions.
 Write your classmate's name on the right if he/she answers "yes."

#	Find someone...	Question	Classmate
1	who usually walks to class	<i>Do you usually walk to class?</i>	
2	who is wearing black socks today	<i>Are you wearing black socks today?</i>	
3	who has two siblings		
4	who likes coffee		
5	who is learning a third language these days		
6	who lives in an apartment		
7	who plays the guitar		
8	who always eats breakfast		
9	who is wearing contact lenses right now		
10	who loves his/her pet		

Exercise 6

QUIZ

Circle the correct answer.

1. Listen!
Someone _____ at the door.
 - a) knock
 - b) knocks
 - c) is knocking
 - d) are knocking
2. It always _____
in our city in April.
 - a) rain
 - b) rains
 - c) is raining
 - d) are raining
3. They _____ each other now.
 - a) don't text
 - b) doesn't text
 - c) isn't texting
 - d) aren't texting
4. The telephone _____.
Can you please answer it?
 - a) ring
 - b) rings
 - c) is ringing
 - d) are ringing
5. My baby _____ from 2:00
to 4:00 every afternoon.
 - a) sleep
 - b) sleeps
 - c) is sleeping
 - d) are sleeping
6. Mr. Jones _____ in his office at
the moment.
 - a) are
 - b) isn't
 - c) is being
 - d) isn't being
7. _____ he _____
his presentation now?
 - a) Do, practice
 - b) Does, practice
 - c) Is, practicing
 - d) Are, practicing
8. My neighbor _____
the garden twice a day.
 - a) water
 - b) waters
 - c) is watering
 - d) are watering
9. The child _____
ice cream right now.
 - a) want
 - b) wants
 - c) is wanting
 - d) are wanting
10. _____ you _____ your
homework every day?
 - a) Do, do
 - b) Does, do
 - c) Is, doing
 - d) Are, doing
11. I can't talk right now.
I _____ dinner.
 - a) have
 - b) has
 - c) am having
 - d) is having
12. It's a beautiful day today.
The sun _____.
 - a) shine
 - b) shines
 - c) is shining
 - d) are shining

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students compare the different uses of the simple present and present progressive tenses. Various exercises that mix the tenses and include non-action verbs will demonstrate if they truly understand when to use each tense.

LEVEL: Beg – Low Int

TIME: 2 hours

TAGS: simple present, present progressive, present continuous, verbs, tense, verb tenses, mixed tenses, time markers, sentence patterns, non-action, stative, grammar

Exercise 1

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. read, are reading | 6. wears, is wearing |
| 2. am eating, eat | 7. leaves, is leaving |
| 3. walks, is walking | 8. shop, are shopping |
| 4. am taking, take | 9. is making, makes |
| 5. studies, is studying | 10. drink, are drinking |

Exercise 2

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. gets | 6. are traveling |
| 2. rises, sets | 7. don't meet, meet |
| 3. is watching, watches | 8. wears, is wearing |
| 4. doesn't travel | 9. are reviewing |
| 5. stays, is staying | 10. isn't making, is washing |

Exercise 3

1. has, is lying
2. is walking, loves
3. am going, costs
4. hates, is wearing, likes
5. has, loves
6. are jogging, is following, think, belongs
7. hear, am
8. are, are watching
9. drives, is taking, has
10. are driving, see

Exercise 4

Answers will vary.

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Exercise 5

Answers will vary.

Exercise 6

- | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. c | 3. d | 5. b | 7. c | 9. b | 11. c |
| 2. b | 4. c | 6. b | 8. b | 10. a | 12. c |

SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the words *Traveling*, *Neighbor*, *Favorite*, *Theater*, and *Practice*. Most other English-speaking countries spell these words this way: *Travelling*, *Neighbour*, *Favourite*, *Theatre*, and *Practise* (when used as a verb; *Practice* when used as a noun). Make it a challenge for your students to find these words in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spellings.

EDITOR'S NOTES:

This lesson should follow our Grammar Practice Worksheets lessons on the simple present and present progressive. For more grammar explanations and practice with these tenses, see:

- Simple Present – Be
<https://esllibrary.com/courses/88/lessons/1591>
- Simple Present
<https://esllibrary.com/courses/88/lessons/2403>
- Present Progressive
<https://esllibrary.com/courses/88/lessons/2464>

Also, for more examples of non-action verbs, see our Grammar & Usage Resource:

- Non-Action Verbs & Exceptions
<https://esllibrary.com/resources/2329>