

Module 1

Present Simple and Present Continuous

We use the present simple for:

- facts and permanent states. *My mother works as a nurse in the local hospital.*
- general truths and laws of nature. *Italians drive on the right.*
- habits and routines (with **always, usually, etc.**). *We often visit my grandparents at the weekend.*
- timetables and programmes (with future reference). *Our plane leaves at 10 o'clock.*
- sporting commentaries, reviews and narrations. *Murray smashes the ball over the net and wins the point.*
- feelings and emotions. *My family loves getting together at the holidays.*

The time words/phrases we use with the present simple are: usually, often, always, every day/week/month/year etc, in the morning/afternoon/evening, at night/the weekend, on Fridays, etc.

We use the present continuous (to be + verb-ing):

- for actions taking place at or around the time of speaking. *The children are playing in the garden right now.*
- for temporary situations. *My dad is decorating the kitchen these days.*
- for fixed arrangements in the near future. *I am meeting my sister for a coffee tomorrow.*
- for currently changing and developing situations. *Jobs are getting more and more competitive nowadays.*
- with adverbs such as 'always' to express anger or irritation at a repeated action. *My sister is always borrowing my things without asking!*

The time words/phrases we use with the present continuous are: now, at the moment, at present, these days, nowadays, still, today, tonight, etc.

Stative Verbs

Stative verbs are verbs which describe a state rather than an action, and so do not usually have a continuous tense. These verbs are:

- verbs of the senses (*see, hear, smell, taste, feel, look, sound, seem, appear, etc.*). *My grandmother's house always smells of fresh cooking.*
 - verbs of perception (*know, believe, understand, realise, remember, forget, etc.*). *Ryan understands how people feel because he's very sympathetic.*
 - verbs which express feelings and emotions (*like, love, hate, prefer, detest, desire, want, etc.*). *I love going to family barbecues.*
 - and some other verbs (*be, contain, include, belong, fit, need, matter, cost, own, want, weigh, wish, have, keep, etc.*). *I wish you would listen!*
- Some of these verbs can be used in continuous tenses, but with a difference in meaning.

Present Simple	Present Continuous
THINK <i>I think he's a very good athlete.</i> (= believe)	(= am considering)
HAVE <i>The Smiths have a fabulous cottage.</i> (= own, possess)	(= am experiencing) <i>My dad is having a nap.</i> (= is taking) <i>My sister is having breakfast.</i> (= is eating)
SEE <i>You can see the entire city from the top of the tower.</i> (= it is visible) <i>Do you see what I'm talking about?</i> (= understand)	(= am meeting) <i>I'm seeing my friends this afternoon at the mall.</i>
TASTE <i>My mum's pudding tastes amazing!</i> (= has the flavour)	(= is testing) <i>Dad is tasting the sauce to see if it's ready.</i>
SMELL <i>This dish smells delicious!</i> (= has the aroma)	(= is sniffing) <i>She is smelling the perfume.</i>
APPEAR <i>The children appear to be having fun.</i> (= seem)	(= is performing) <i>He is appearing in a new film.</i>
FIT <i>That dress fits you perfectly.</i> (= it's the right size)	(= is attaching) <i>He is fitting a new carpet in the living room.</i>
LOOK <i>This scarf looks expensive.</i> (= appears to be)	(= is taking a look) <i>She is looking at her graduation photos.</i>
FEEL <i>This shirt feels like silk.</i> (= it has the texture of)	(= is touching) <i>He is feeling his forehead a fever.</i>
BE <i>She is a good-natured person.</i> (character – permanent state)	(behaviour – temporary state)

Notes:

- Although the verb **enjoy** expresses a feeling, it can be used in continuous tenses. *My brother really enjoys playing computer games. He's enjoying the programme very much.*