

Present Continuous vs. Present Simple: Temporary Situations

INTERMEDIATE

Focus: Today / this week / this year, Periods around now, Current vs. permanent states

The difference between permanent states and temporary situations is one of the most important concepts in English grammar.

1. Permanent States (Present Simple)

We use the **Present Simple** for facts, habits, and situations that are generally true and unlikely to change soon.

- **Time markers:** *always, usually, normally, every day, often.*

2. Temporary Situations (Present Continuous)

We use the **Present Continuous** (am/is/are + verb-ing) for actions happening around now or situations that are only true for a limited time.

- **Time markers:** *today, this week, this month, this year, currently, at the moment, for the time being.*

3. Periods Around Now

We also use the Present Continuous for longer actions happening "around now" (this week/year), even if we are not doing them at this exact moment.

Examples:

- **Permanent:** She **lives** in London. (This is her permanent home).
- **Temporary:** She **is living** in Paris for three months. (This is a temporary situation).
- **Contrast:** I normally **drive** to work, but this week I **am taking** the bus because my car is broken.

Practice Exercises

Complete the sentences using either the Present Simple or the Present Continuous form of the verb in brackets. Pay attention to the time markers and context.

- usually, I _____ (wear) a suit to work, but today I _____ (wear) jeans.
- My sister _____ (live) in New York, but she _____ (stay) with us this month.
- We normally _____ (eat) dinner at 7:00 PM, but this week we _____ (eat) later because of work.
- Look at the weather! It _____ (rain) again. It hardly ever _____ (rain) here in summer.
- I _____ (read) a really interesting book about history at the moment.
- My brother _____ (look) for a job, so he _____ (spend) a lot of time on his computer these days.
- They usually _____ (go) to Spain for their holidays, but this year they _____ (visit) Italy.
- Jack _____ (work) as a waiter this summer to save money for university.
- I _____ (not / use) my car this week because the engine is making a strange noise.
- Sarah usually _____ (drink) coffee, but this morning she _____ (drink) tea.
- The company _____ (expand) quickly this year, although the economy is slow.
- He usually _____ (teach) math, but this term he _____ (teach) physics.
- _____ (you / enjoy) your stay here in London, or do you want to go home?
- Most people in this town _____ (work) at the factory, but it _____ (close) down slowly.
- I _____ (study) French this semester because I want to travel to Paris next year.

| Answer Key

- 1.** wear / am wearing
- 2.** lives / is staying
- 3.** eat / are eating
- 4.** is raining / rains
- 5.** am reading
- 6.** is looking / is spending
- 7.** go / are visiting
- 8.** is working
- 9.** am not using
- 10.** drinks / is drinking
- 11.** is expanding
- 12.** teaches / is teaching
- 13.** Are you enjoying
- 14.** work / is closing
- 15.** am studying