

Present continuous and present simple 2

Reminder → A1–A5

A We often use the present simple and present continuous in stories and jokes in informal spoken English to create the impression that events are happening now. This can make them more direct and exciting and hold people's attention:

- She **goes** up to this man and **looks** straight into his eyes. He's not **wearing** his glasses, and he **doesn't recognise** her ...
- This man's **playing** golf when a kangaroo **bounds** up to him, **grabs** his club and **hits** his ball about half a mile ...



The main events are usually described in sequence using the present simple and longer background events are described using the present continuous.

In narratives and anecdotes the present simple can be used to highlight an event. Often it is used after past tenses and with a phrase such as **suddenly** or **all of a sudden**:

- I was sitting in the park, reading a newspaper, when *all of a sudden* this dog **jumps** at me.

B We also use the present simple and present continuous in live commentaries (for example, on sports events) when the report takes place at the same time as the action:

- King **serves** to the left-hand court and Adams **makes** a wonderful return. She's **playing** magnificent tennis in this match ...

C We can use the present simple in phrases such as **It says here**, **I hear**, **I gather**, **I see**, **I understand** and **They say**, **(Someone) says**, **(Someone) tells me** to introduce news that we have heard, read, seen (e.g. on television), or been told. We can also use past tenses (e.g. **It said here**, **I heard**):

- I gather** you're worried about Pedro.
- Sophia **tells me** you're thinking of emigrating.
- Professor Hendriks is at the conference and **I hear** she's an excellent speaker.

D The present simple is often used in news headlines to talk about events that have recently happened:

SECOND QUAKE HITS JAPAN**FIRE BREAKS OUT IN HOTEL ROOM****SCIENTISTS FIND ICE ON THE MOON****FOREIGN MINISTER RESIGNS**

We can use the present simple to refer to the contents of books, films, newspapers, etc:

- Thompson **gives** a list of the largest European companies in Chapter 6.
- At the beginning of the book, three men **find** \$4 million in a crashed plane.
- In the film, Loni Baranski **takes** the role of a private detective.

E We can use the present continuous with adverbs such as **always**, **constantly**, **continually** or **forever** to emphasise that something is done so often that it is characteristic of a person, group or thing:

- a: I think I'll stay here after all. b: You're *constantly* **changing** your mind.
- Jacob is a really kind person. He's *always* **offering** to help me with my work.

We often use this pattern to indicate disapproval. The past continuous is used in a similar way with these adverbs (e.g. **Was** Olivia *always* **asking** you for money, too?).

We can use the present continuous to describe something we regularly do at a certain time:




- At eight o'clock I'm usually **driving** to work, so phone me on my mobile.
- Seven o'clock is a bit early. We're generally **eating** then.

Exercises

2.1 Complete these sentences using the verbs in brackets. Use the present simple or present continuous. **A & B**

- Rodriguez passes to Messi who just over the bar. Barcelona much more in this half ... (*pass - shoot - attack*)
- A man home late one night after the office Christmas party. His wife for him, and she to him ... (*arrive - wait - say*)
- I went to a concert yesterday in the Town Hall. In the middle of it, while the orchestra this man suddenly on his seat and to conduct them. (*play - stand - start*)

2.2 Complete what each person says about the news they have read or heard using the present tense phrases in C. **C**

- Government gives health service billions** *I see the government's giving the health service a lot more money.*
- Vegecorp to sack 1,000 workers.** Vegecorp are going to
- President Cartman announced a new public holiday on his birthday, August 6th. He made the announcement ...
..... we're going to have
-  Did you hear that Bruno's crashed his car again?
Ed Bruno's
-  I've got a new job.
Julia she's
-  A team of researchers claims to have identified a gene which causes some people to overeat.
..... they've identified

2.3 Expand one of the sets of notes below to complete each dialogue. **E**

continually / change / mind forever / moan / work forever / ask me / money
constantly / criticise / driving -always- / complain / handwriting

- A: I can't read this. B: You're always complaining about my handwriting.
- A: Can I borrow €10? B: You're
- A: That was a dangerous thing to do. B: You're
- A: I think I'll stay here after all. B: You're
- A: I had a bad day at the office again. B: You're

2.4 Complete each pair of sentences using the same verb (in negative form if necessary). Use **✓** to add any words outside the gap. **D & E**

- a A: Shall I phone at six? B: No, we usually dinner at that time.
b I lamb, thanks. I'm a vegetarian.
- a Gielman Henry V in the latest production at the Royal Theatre.
b They constantly loud music until the early hours of the morning.
- a I normally the children to school at 8:30. Perhaps we could meet at 9:00.
b In his 2007 book, Wall a controversial view of Britain's role in the war.