

# Present Tenses (*I am doing / I do*) with a Future Meaning

A

*Present continuous (I am doing)* with a future meaning  
Study this example situation:



This is Ben's appointment book for next week.  
He is **playing** tennis on Monday afternoon.  
He is **going** to the dentist on Tuesday morning.  
He is **having** dinner with Ann on Friday.  
In all these examples, Ben has already decided and arranged to do these things.

We use the *present continuous* to say what we have already arranged to do. Do not use the *simple present (I do)*:

- A: What are you doing on Saturday evening? (*not* What do you do)
- B: I'm going to the theater. (*not* I go)
- B: What time is Cathy arriving tomorrow?
- A: At 10:30. I'm meeting her at the airport.
- I'm not working tomorrow, so we can go somewhere.
- Sam isn't playing football on Saturday. He hurt his leg.

"(I'm) going to (do)" is also possible in these sentences:

- What are you going to do Saturday night?

But the present continuous is more natural for arrangements. See also Unit 19B.

Do not use *will* to talk about what you have arranged to do:

- What are you doing tonight? (*not* What will you do)
- Eric is getting married next month. (*not* will get)

B

*Simple present (I do)* with a future meaning

We use the simple present to talk about timetables, schedules, etc. (for example, for public transportation, movies, etc.):

- The plane leaves Chicago at 11:30 and arrives in Atlanta at 2:45.
- What time does the movie begin?
- Tomorrow is Wednesday.

You can use the simple present for people if their plans are fixed, like a schedule:

- I start my new job on Monday.
- What time do you finish work tomorrow?

But the continuous is more commonly used for personal arrangements:

- What time are you meeting Ann tomorrow? (*not* do you meet)

Compare:

- What time are you leaving tomorrow?
- but* What time does the plane leave tomorrow?
- I'm going to the movies tonight.
- but* The movie starts at 8:15 (tonight).

## Exercises

**18.1** A friend of yours is planning to go on vacation soon. Ask her about her plans. Use the words in parentheses to make your questions.

1. (where / go?) Where are you going?
2. (how long / stay?) \_\_\_\_\_
3. (when / go?) \_\_\_\_\_
4. (go / alone?) \_\_\_\_\_
5. (travel / by car?) \_\_\_\_\_
6. (where / stay?) \_\_\_\_\_

Quebec.  
Ten days.  
Next Friday.  
No, with a friend of mine.  
No, by train.  
In a hotel.

**18.2** Ben wants you to visit him, but you are very busy. Look at your appointment book for the next few days and explain to him why you can't come.



- Ben: Can you come on Monday evening?  
You: Sorry, but I'm playing volleyball. (1)  
Ben: What about Tuesday evening?  
You: No, not Tuesday. I \_\_\_\_\_. (2)  
Ben: And Wednesday evening?  
You: \_\_\_\_\_. (3)  
Ben: Well, are you free on Thursday?  
You: I'm afraid not. \_\_\_\_\_. (4)

**18.3** Have you arranged to do anything at these times? Write (true) sentences about yourself.

1. (tonight) I'm going out tonight OR I'm not doing anything tonight.
2. (tomorrow morning) I \_\_\_\_\_.
3. (tomorrow night) \_\_\_\_\_.
4. (next Sunday) \_\_\_\_\_.
5. (choose another day or time) \_\_\_\_\_.

**18.4** Put the verb into the more appropriate form, present continuous or simple present.

1. I 'm going (go) to the theater tonight.
2. Does the movie begin (the movie / begin) at 3:30 or 4:30?
3. We \_\_\_\_\_ (have) a party next Saturday. Would you like to come?
4. The art exhibit \_\_\_\_\_ (open) on May 3.
5. I \_\_\_\_\_ (not / go) out this evening. I \_\_\_\_\_ (stay) at home.
6. "\_\_\_\_\_ (you / do) anything tomorrow morning?" "No, I'm free."
7. We \_\_\_\_\_ (go) to a concert tonight. It \_\_\_\_\_ (begin) at 7:30.
8. You are on a train to New York and you ask another passenger:  
Excuse me. What time \_\_\_\_\_ (this train / get) to New York?
9. You are talking to Ann: Ann, I \_\_\_\_\_ (go) to the store.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (you / come) with me?
10. Sue \_\_\_\_\_ (come) to New York tomorrow. She \_\_\_\_\_ (fly) from Vancouver, and her plane \_\_\_\_\_ (arrive) at 10:15. I \_\_\_\_\_ (meet) her at the airport.
11. I \_\_\_\_\_ (not / use) the car tonight, so you can have it.
12. (watching TV) I'm bored with this program. When \_\_\_\_\_ (it / end)?