

## Present Continuous and Simple Present (2)

### (I am doing and I do)

## A

We can use *continuous tenses* only for actions and happenings (they are eating / it is raining, etc.). Some verbs (for example, know and like) are not action verbs. You cannot say "I am knowing" or "they are liking"; you can only say I know, they like.

The following verbs are not normally used in continuous tenses:

like love hate want need prefer  
know realize suppose mean understand believe remember  
belong contain consist depend seem

- I'm hungry. I want something to eat. (*not* I'm wanting)
- Do you understand what I mean?
- Kim doesn't seem very happy right now.

When **think** means "believe," do not use the continuous:

- What do you **think** (= believe) will happen? (*not* What are you thinking)
- but* ■ You look serious. What are you **thinking** about? (= What is going on in your mind?)
- I'm **thinking** of quitting my job. (= I am considering)

When **have** means "possess," etc., do not use the continuous (see Unit 16):

- We're enjoying our trip. We have a nice room in the hotel. (*not* We're having)
- but* ■ We're enjoying our trip. We're **having** a great time.

## B

See hear smell taste

We normally use the *simple present* (*not* continuous) with these verbs:

- Do you see that man over there? (*not* Are you seeing)
- This room smells. Let's open a window.

We often use **can** + see/hear/smell/taste:

- Listen! **Can** you hear something?

Note that you can say I'm seeing when the meaning is "having a meeting with" (especially in the future – see Unit 18A):

- I'm **seeing** the manager tomorrow morning.

## C

He is selfish and He is being selfish

He's **being** = He's behaving / He's acting. Compare:

- I can't understand why he's **being** so selfish. He isn't usually like that.  
(**being** selfish = behaving selfishly at the moment)
- but* ■ He never thinks about other people. He is very selfish. (*not* He is **being**)  
(= he is selfish generally, not only at the moment)

We use **am/is/are being** to say how somebody is behaving. It is not usually possible in other sentences:

- It's hot today. (*not* It is **being** hot)
- Sarah is very tired. (*not* is **being** tired)

## D

Look and feel

You can use simple present or continuous to say how somebody looks or feels now:







- You look good today. *or* You're **looking** good today.
- How do you feel now? *or* How are you **feeling** now?
- but* ■ I usually feel tired in the morning. (*not* I'm usually **feeling**)

# Exercises

## 4.1 Are the underlined verbs right or wrong? Correct the ones that are wrong.

1. I'm seeing the manager tomorrow morning. RIGHT
2. I'm feeling hungry. Is there anything to eat? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Are you believing in God? \_\_\_\_\_
4. This sauce is great. It's tasting really good. \_\_\_\_\_
5. I'm thinking this is your key. Am I right? \_\_\_\_\_

## 4.2 Look at the pictures. Use the words in parentheses to make sentences. (You should also study Unit 3 before you do this exercise.)

<p>1. (you / not / seem / very happy today) <u>You don't seem very happy today.</u></p> 	<p>4. (dinner / smell / good) _____</p> 
<p>2. (what / you / do?) _____</p> <p>Be quiet! (I / think)</p> 	<p>5. Excuse me. (anybody / sit / here?) _____</p> <p>No, go ahead.</p> 
<p>3. (who / this umbrella / belong to?) _____</p> <p>I have no idea.</p> 	<p>6. Can I call you back in half an hour? (I / have / dinner) _____</p> 

## 4.3 Put the verb into the correct form, present continuous or simple present.

1. Are you hungry? Do you want something to eat? (you / want)
2. Don't put the dictionary away. I \_\_\_\_\_ it. (use)
3. Don't put the dictionary away. I \_\_\_\_\_ it. (need)
4. Who is that man? What \_\_\_\_\_? (he / want)
5. Who is that man? Why \_\_\_\_\_ at us? (he / look)
6. George says he's 80 years old, but nobody \_\_\_\_\_ him. (believe)
7. She told me her name, but I \_\_\_\_\_ it now. (not / remember)
8. I \_\_\_\_\_ of selling my car. (think) Would you be interested in buying it?
9. I \_\_\_\_\_ you should sell your car. (think) You \_\_\_\_\_ it very often. (not / use)
10. Air \_\_\_\_\_ mainly of nitrogen and oxygen. (consist)

## 4.4 Complete the sentences using the most appropriate form of be, simple present (am/is/are) or present continuous (am/is/are being).

1. I can't understand why he's being so selfish. He isn't usually like that.
2. Jack \_\_\_\_\_ very nice to me tonight. I wonder why.
3. You'll like Jill when you meet her. She \_\_\_\_\_ very nice.
4. You're usually very patient, so why \_\_\_\_\_ so unreasonable about waiting five more minutes?
5. Why isn't Sarah at work today? \_\_\_\_\_ sick?