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How do you choose between **Present Simple** and **Present Continuous**?

He is reading.



He reads every day.

via <https://s-english.ru/uprazhneniya/present-simple-present-continuous>

Both **Present Simple** and **Present Continuous** are used to talk about something that happens in present.

We use **Present Simple** when we want to talk about fixed habits or routines - things that don't change.

We use **Present Continuous** to talk about actions which are happening at the present moment, but will soon finish.

Compare the following examples:

- *He **is reading** a book.*
- *He **reads** every day.*

'*He reads every day*' tells us that reading a book is something the speaker always does. It is part of a routine or habit. This is a permanent situation.

'*He is reading a book*' tells us that the speaker is reading a book right now. Soon this action

will be over. This is a temporary situation.

## Present Simple or Present Continuous?

So, how do you choose between the Present Simple and Present Continuous?

### Present Simple

1. We use Present Simple to talk about facts, hobbies and regular activities:

- Tom **lives** in London. (*fact*)
- I **go** swimming on Mondays. (*regular activity*)
- Do you **speak** Russian? (*question about a fact*)

2. We use the Present Simple to talk or ask about things that are always true:

- **Do** you **speak** English?
- I **don't have** a car, I **prefer** to ride a bike.

3. We use the Present Simple to express likes, dislikes and opinions:

- I like football. (*likes*)
- I don't like tennis. (*dislikes*)
- Do you love pop music? (*question about likes*)
- I think it's interesting. (*opinions*)

4. We also use the Present Simple to talk or ask about habits:

- Peter **goes** for a walk every day.
- **Do** you **drink** tea or coffee in the morning?

5. We often use the Present Simple with adverbs of frequency (*always, sometimes, never, etc.*), or when we say a time, day or period (*at 9.00, on Wednesdays, in spring, etc.*):

- Sometimes I **dream** about you.
- I never **walk** alone at night.
- Jane **wakes up** at 7.00 a.m.
- He **meets** with his friends on Saturdays.

## Present Continuous

1. We use the Present Continuous to talk about things happening now, or unfinished activities:

- **Are you *reading*** a book? (now)
- They **are *building*** a new house. (it's not finished yet)
- Mary **is *studying*** French at university. (around now, not at the moment of speaking)

2. We use the Present Continuous to talk about [future arrangements](#):

- She **is *getting married*** on November 5th.
- We're **leaving** tomorrow.

3. We use the Present Continuous to talk about annoying habits (+ always):

- You **are always *losing*** things.
- The children **are always *fighting***.

4. We use expressions like 'at the moment', 'now', and 'today/this week/month/year':

- Michael **is *talking*** on the phone at the moment.
- It's **snowing** a lot this week.
- I'm **working** in our Chicago office this month.

Note: The verbs '**want**', '**like**', '**love**', '**need**', '**understand**' and '**believe**' are not used in Present Continuous:

- I want something to eat. NOT: ~~I'm wanting something to eat.~~
- Do you need a pencil? NOT: ~~Are you needing a pencil?~~

## How to form

Let's compare the forms of Present Simple and Present Continuous:



via <https://englishfull.ru/grammatika/present-simple-i-present-continuous.html>

## Adverbs of time

Let's compare the adverbs and adverbial phrases that are used with Present Simple and Present Continuous:



via <https://englishfull.ru/grammatika/present-simple-i-present-continuous.html>

Watch the video from Learn English from Nick Shepherd explaining the difference between Present Simple and Present Continuous:

See also:

[Present Simple: Statements](#)

[Present Continuous: Statements](#)