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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](#)