

Lesson: Present continuous

(Present progressive)

(be +Ing)

The present continuous is made from the **present tense of the verb *be*** and the **-ing form of a verb**:

<i>I am</i>	<i>working</i>
<i>You are</i>	<i>playing</i>
<i>He is</i>	<i>talking</i>
<i>She is</i>	<i>living</i>
<i>It is</i>	<i>eating</i>
<i>We are</i>	<i>staying</i>
<i>They are</i>	<i>sleeping</i>

We use the present continuous to talk about:

- **activities at the moment of speaking** (= être en train de...):

*I'm just **leaving** work. I'll be home in an hour.*

*Please be quiet. The children **are sleeping**.*

- **future plans or arrangements:**

Mary **is going** to a new school **next term**.

What **are** you **doing next week**?

Present continuous questions

We make questions by putting **am, is** or **are** in front of the **subject**:

Are you listening?

Are they coming to your party?

When **is she** going home?

What **am I** doing here?

Present continuous negatives

We make negatives by putting **not** (or **n't**) after **am, is** or **are**:

I'm not doing that.

You **aren't** listening. (or You're **not** listening.)

They **aren't** coming to the party. (or They're **not** coming to the party.)

She **isn't** going home until Monday. (or She's **not** going home until Monday.)

Stative verbs

We do **not normally** use the continuous **with stative verbs**. Stative verbs include:

- verbs of **thinking and feeling**:

<i>believe</i>	<i>love</i>	<i>recognise</i>	<i>understand</i>
<i>dislike</i>	<i>hate</i>	<i>remember</i>	<i>want</i>
<i>know</i>	<i>prefer</i>	<i>suppose</i>	<i>wish</i>
<i>like</i>	<i>realise</i>	<i>think (= believe)</i>	

- verbs of **the senses**:

<i>appear</i>	<i>look</i>	<i>smell</i>	<i>taste</i>
<i>feel</i>	<i>seem</i>	<i>sound</i>	

- **others:**

<i>agree</i>	<i>belong</i>	<i>need</i>	<i>own</i>
<i>be</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>owe</i>	<i>possess</i>

We normally use the simple present instead (= in lieu of - "au lieu de"):

I understand you. (NOT: *I ~~am understanding~~ you.*)

This cake tastes wonderful. (NOT: *This cake ~~is tasting~~ wonderful.*)

We also use the present continuous to talk about:

- something which is happening **before and after a specific time:**

*At eight o'clock we **are** usually **having** breakfast.*

*When I get home the children **are doing** their homework.*

- something which **we think is temporary:**

*Michael is at university. He's **studying** history.*

*I'm **working** in London for the next two weeks.*

- something which is **new** and **contrasts** with a previous state:

*These days most people **are using** email instead of writing letters.*

*What sort of clothes **are** teenagers **wearing** nowadays?*

*What sort of music **are** they **listening** to?*

- something which is **changing, growing or developing**:

*The children **are growing up** quickly.*

*The climate **is changing** rapidly.*

*Your English **is improving**.*

- something which happens **again and again**:

*It's **always raining** in London.*

*They **are always arguing**.*

*George is great. He's **always laughing**.*

Note that we normally use **always** with this use.

We can use the present continuous to talk about the **past** when we are:

- **telling a story:**

*The other day I'm just **walking** down the street when suddenly this man comes up to me and asks me to lend him some money. Well, he's **carrying** a big stick and he looks a bit dangerous, so I'm **wondering** what to do ...*

- **summarising** (= résumer) a book, film or play:

*Harry Potter is a pupil at Hogwarts school. One day when he **is playing** Quidditch he sees a strange object in the sky. He wonders what **is happening** ...*