



COMPLETE ENGLISH TENSES,
FIT FOR IELTS AND TOEFL

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Unit 1 Present tenses

Simple Present

Form:

We form the present tense using the base form of the infinitive. Run, come, buy, learn.

In general, we add 'S' in the third person.

Subject	Verb	The Rest of the sentence
I / you / we / they	speak learn	English at home
he / she / it	speaks learns	English at home

The spelling for the verb in the third person differs depending on the ending of that verb:

1. For verbs that end in **-O**, **-CH**, **-SH**, **-SS**, **-X**, or **-Z** we add **-ES** in the third person.

- go – goes
- catch – catches
- wash – washes
- kiss – kisses
- fix – fixes
- buzz – buzzes

2. For verbs that end in a **consonant + Y**, we remove the **Y** and add **-IES**.

- marry – marries

- study – studies
- carry – carries
- worry – worries

NOTE: For verbs that end in a **vowel + Y**, we just add **-S**.

- play – plays
- enjoy – enjoys

Use

The simple present tense is used to describe an action that is regular, true or normal.

We use the present tense:

1. For repeated or regular actions in the present time period.

- I **take** the train to work everyday.
- The train to London **leaves** every hour.
- Prince **sleeps** eight hours every night during the week.

2. For facts.

- The President of The USA **lives** in The White House.
- A Cat **has** four legs.
- We **come** from Germany.

3. For habits.

- I **get up** early every day.
- Sunny **brushes** his teeth twice a day.
- They **travel** to Bochum every weekend.

4. For things that are always / generally true.

- It **rains** a lot in winter.
- The Queen of England **lives** in Buckingham Palace.
- They **speak** Spanish at work.

Negative Sentences in the Simple Present Tense

To make a negative sentence in English we normally use Don't or Doesn't with all verbs EXCEPT **To Be** and **Modal verbs** (can, might, should etc.).

- Affirmative: You speak French.

Negative: You **don't** speak French.

You will see that we add **don't** between the subject and the verb. We use **Don't** when the subject is **I, you, we** or **they**.

- Affirmative: He speaks German.
Negative: He **doesn't** speak German.

When the subject is **he, she** or **it**, we add **doesn't** between the subject and the verb to make a negative sentence. Notice that the letter **S** at the end of the verb in the affirmative sentence (because it is in third person) disappears in the negative sentence. We will see the reason why below.

Negative Contractions

Don't

Doesn't = Does not

Isn't = Is not

Aren't = Are not

I **don't** like meat = I **do not** like meat.

- You **don't** speak Arabic.
- John **doesn't** speak Italian.
- We **don't** have time for a rest.
- It **doesn't** move.

• Questions in the Simple Present Tense

1. With **be**, put *am/ are/ is* first

Are you Swedish?

2. With all other verbs, use *do/does*

Does it cost a lot?

3. With question words (who, what, where, how, etc.), add *do/does* to the question word

Where **does** he work? How **do** they get to work?

4. If the question word is the subject, do not use *do / does*.

Who **works** for a multinational?

5. Indirect questions can start with expressions such as,

Can i ask...?, Do you know...?, Could you tell me...?

Do you know where the report is?

Examples of Questions with Do and Does:

- **Do** you need a dictionary?
- **Does** Mary need a dictionary?
- **Do** we have a meeting now?
- **Does** it rain a lot in winter?
- **Do** they want to go to the party?
- **Does** he like pizza?

Present Continuous

Form:

Present continuous positive: am / is / are + -ing form

Kenny **is emailing** her business partner. (The action is taking place now)

Present continuous negative: am / is / are + not + -ing form

I am not singing, I am dancing

Use

1. To talk about situations happening at or around the time of speaking.

Sorry, I can't help you. **I am writing** a very important email **now**.

2. To talk about temporary situations or activities.

We're **doing** more and more work in Africa at the moment.

I usually sleep at 9:00 but today, I *am sleeping* at 11:00

Questions

1. To make questions with the present continuous, put *am / is / are* before the subject.

Are you working overtime **this week**?

How **are you getting** on?

Language tip: State verbs are not used in the present continuous, e.g. know,

believe, like, love hate, forget, notice, remember. Verbs that describe emotions and feelings, they remain in the present tense. e.g. I am knowing you I know you

She is liking me she likes me

Exercise 101

Complete the sentences with the present simple or the present continuous form of the verbs in brackets.

1. Gee usually _____ (sit) in the main office, but today he _____ (work) at home.
2. What time _____ (you / have to) leave home to get to work?
3. _____ (you/know) Efa? He _____ (work) in the IT department too.
4. 'What _____ Caro _____ (do)?'
'I _____ (think) she _____ (be) on the phone. Maybe she _____ (make) an appointment with one of the suppliers.'
5. More and more customers _____ (buy) environmentally friendly products these days.
6. I often _____ (have) lunch just after noon, but today we _____ (have) a very late lunch because there is so much to do.
7. I usually _____ (start) work at 9:30. But this week I _____ (start) half an hour earlier because my colleague _____ (be) on holiday and I _____ (do) some of his work too.
8. Look at the man over there. Why _____ (he / sit) at John's desk?
9. How much _____ (a successful salesperson / earn) each year?
10. Whose briefcase is this? I _____ (think) it _____ (belong) to one of our clients