

TENSES IN ENGLISH: COMPARING PRESENT SIMPLE AND PRESENT CONTINUOUS.

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Annotation: The topic "Tenses in English: Comparing Present Simple and Present Continuous" focuses on two of the most commonly used tenses in English grammar. This article compares their structures, time expressions, and typical usage in daily communication. Understanding the differences between these tenses helps learners speak and write more accurately. The article includes practical examples and common mistakes to support effective learning.

Key words: Present simple, present continuous, tense comparison, practical usage, forms.

The use of the Present Indefinite.

The present Indefinite is used to denote:

1. Customary, repeated actions. This is its most characteristic use. For example, the Browns **go** to the seaside every summer.

The repeated character of the action is often shown by adverbials such as **every day, often, usually, sometimes, etc.**

2.Actions and states characterizing a given person. She **has** many accomplishments: she **sings** and **plays** the piano beautifully.

3.Universal truths, something which is eternally true. Magnet **attracts** iron. The earth **rotatoes** round its axis.

4.Actions going on at the present moment(with verbs not used in the Continious form). I **see** George in the street. Tell him to come in. I **hear** somebody knock. Go and open the door.

The list of verbs which are normally not used in the Continuous form (but there are exceptions) is as follows: **want, prefer, like, love, hate, belong, see, hear, know, realize, believe,suppose, mean, understand, remember, forget, seem, have** (when the meaning is "possess"), **think** (when the meaning is "believe ").

5. A future action:

a) in adverbial classes of time and condition after the conjunctions **when, till, until, before, after, as soon as, as long as, if, unless, on condition that, provided.**

...Robert, will you send me a pen or two before you **go**? (Ch.Bronte)

b) with verbs of motion, such as to go, to come, to leave etc. The future action is regarded as something fixed. The train **leaves** at 10 tomorrow.

2.The formation of the Present Indefinite.

Affirmative: subject+ verb1. I play football with my friends every Saturday.

In the third person singular the ending -s is added. After a sibilant represented in spelling by s, ss, ch, sh, x, z and after the vowel o, -es is added: he/she/ it + verb(s, es) he writes, she speaks, he watches.

Interrogative: do/ does+ subject+ verbs?

Do I work at a hotel? Does she draw beautiful pictures?

Negative: subject + do\does + not+ verb.

I do not/ don't work. She does not/doesn't work.

PRESENT CONTINUOUS

The formation of the Present Continuous:

Affirmative: subject + am/is/are +verb(ing). I'm/am reading a new novel now.
She's/is working at the restaurant.

Interrogative: In the interrogative form the auxiliary verb is placed before the subject. Am/is/are+ subject+verb(ing). Are you studying at university?

Negative: In the negative form negative particle **not** is placed after the auxiliary verb. Subject + am/is/are + not +verb(ing). She isn't/ is not reading an article.

The use of the Present Continuous.

1. We use present continuous for actions taking place now, at the moment of speaking, or for temporary actions; that is actions that are going on around now, but not at the actual moment of speaking.

Helen is working hard these days. Right now she's reading a newspaper(she is not working at the moment of speaking.)

2. With always when we want to express our irritation at actions which happen too often.

You are always forgetting to pay the bills.

3. For actions that we have already arranged to do in the near future, especially when the time and place have been decided.

Melanie is getting married at 3 this afternoon.(The time and the place for the wedding ceremony have been decided.)

4. For changing or developing situations.

More and more forests are disappearing because of fires.

The present continuous is used with the following time expressions: now, at the moment, these days, at present, tonight, nowadays, still, etc.

The differences of the Present Continuous and Present Simple.

1. Sentence: She goes to school every day. Tense: present simple. Explanation: regular habit.

Sentence: She is going to school now. Tense: present continuous. Explanation: action happening now.

2. I watch movies with my friends on weekends. Tense: present simple. Explanation: routine.

I am watching a movie with my friends right now. Tense: present continuous. Explanation: current action.

Here are common mistakes learners make with Present Simple and Present Continuous, along with how to fix them:

1. Using the wrong tense for the situation

Mistake: She goes to the market now.

(Present Simple used for a current action)

Correct: She is going to the market now.

(Use Present Continuous for actions happening right now)

Mistake: I am going to school every day.

(Present Continuous used for a routine)

Correct: I go to school every day.

(Use Present Simple for routines/habits)

2. Forgetting “-ing” in Present Continuous

Mistake: He is play football.

Correct: He is playing football.

3. Missing auxiliary verb in Present Continuous

Mistake: She working now.

Correct: She is working now.

4. Incorrect subject-verb agreement in Present Simple

Mistake: He go to school.

Correct: He goes to school.

(Add -s or -es for he/she/it in Present Simple)

5. Using stative verbs in Present Continuous

Mistake: I am knowing the answer.

Correct: I know the answer.

(Stative verbs like know, believe, love, want are usually used in Present Simple)

6. Mixing up time expressions

Mistake: She is working every day.

(Present Continuous used with a time expression for habits)

Correct: She works every day.

Conclusion: The Present Simple and Present Continuous tenses are widely used to express present time in English. The Present Simple is used for regular, repeated actions and general truths, while the Present Continuous is used for actions happening at the moment or temporary activities. Being able to distinguish between these two tenses correctly helps communicate clearly and accurately in English. Understanding the subtle differences in their usage is an important step for language learners.

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