

The present simple has these uses:

It is used to describe your habits.

*I always have a fruit smoothie before I go to work.  
I visit my friend in hospital every Sunday.*

It is used to describe factual information - things that are true.

*Red meat is a good source of iron.  
Drinking orange juice helps your body digest the iron in red meat.*



It is used to describe things that are true for a long time.

*I work at the General Hospital in Hamilton. My mother is a surgeon.*

We can make present simple questions with **do** (I/we/you/they) or **does** (he/she/it). We answer "Yes, I do" or "No, I don't etc".

*Do you like your job? Yes, I do.  
Does she work long hours? Yes, she does.  
Does your boss make you work long hours? No, he doesn't.*

We make negative sentences with **don't** (I/we/you/they) or **doesn't** (he/she/it).

*I don't like my job.  
She doesn't work long hours.  
He doesn't make me work long hours.*



The **present continuous** (am/ is/are + verb+ing) is used to describe something that is happening.

The action is in progress - it hasn't finished yet.

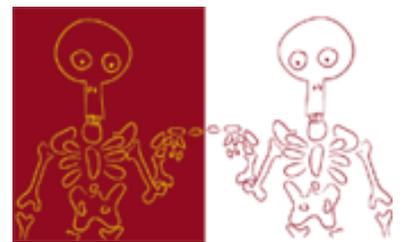
*What are you doing? I'm reading this email.  
Look! Keiko is sleeping at her desk.*

We do not have to be doing the action as we are speaking.

*I'm doing two courses at night school this year.  
I need to go back to work. I'm writing a report on absenteeism.*

We use the present continuous tense when describing actions that are temporary.

*I'm studying for my last exam.  
I'm living in the nurses' home at the moment. But soon I will find an apartment.  
The Xray machine is broken. We're using the one from the ward below this week.*



The present continuous can also be used to talk about a current trend.

*People are thinking more about how work will affect their families now.  
Work absenteeism rates are increasing.*

Some verbs are not normally used in the present continuous tense (or in any other continuous tense). These verbs are not actions. These include: **know, remember, hate, understand, suppose, belong**.

Present continuous questions use **am/is/are** (I/we/you/they) + **verb+ing**\* (present participle). We answer "Yes, I am" or "No, I'm not etc".

*Are you enjoying your job? Yes, I am.  
Is she working long hours at the moment? Yes, she is.  
Is your boss making you work long hours during the New Year Sales? No, he isn't.*

We make negative sentences with (I/we/you/they) **am/is/are + not + verb+ing**.

*I'm not sleeping! I'm thinking.  
She isn't sitting at her desk. She's standing by the computer.*



## Exercise 1

Jo is a nurse. Fill in the gaps in the description of a typical work day for her by putting the verb in brackets into the correct present simple tense form.



Jo 1. \_\_\_\_\_ (be) a nurse. She 2. \_\_\_\_\_ (work) at a medical clinic near her home in Ipswich. She 3. \_\_\_\_\_ (get) to work at 8 am every weekday. She first 4. \_\_\_\_\_ (check) the phone for voice messages and the fax machine for faxes. She then 5. \_\_\_\_\_ (talk) to the doctors about the day's appointments. At 8.30 she 6. \_\_\_\_\_ (make) sure that the medical instruments 7. \_\_\_\_\_ (be) ready for use and that everything 8. \_\_\_\_\_ (be) clean and tidy.

The doctors and nurses 9. \_\_\_\_\_ (start) seeing patients at 9.00. Jo 10. \_\_\_\_\_ (spend) a lot of time giving babies and children vaccinations. She 11. \_\_\_\_\_ (talk) to their parents about any worries they 12. \_\_\_\_\_ (have). The doctors 13. \_\_\_\_\_ (call) her for help with bandaging or tests. She 14. \_\_\_\_\_ (be) also available at all times for medical emergencies.

At lunchtime Jo 15. \_\_\_\_\_ (answer) the phone while the receptionist 16. \_\_\_\_\_ (have) her lunch. It 17. \_\_\_\_\_ (be + not) a busy time so Jo usually 18. \_\_\_\_\_ (have) a cup of tea. She 19. \_\_\_\_\_ (try) to do any paperwork during this time too. The clinic 20. \_\_\_\_\_ (have + not) as many patients in the afternoon unless it 21. \_\_\_\_\_ (be) a Friday.

At around 4.00 she 22. \_\_\_\_\_ (check) that her computer files 23. \_\_\_\_\_ (be) up-to-date. She 24. \_\_\_\_\_ (look) at the clinic's stock of medical supplies and 25. \_\_\_\_\_ (phone) the manufacturers to order more of something, if necessary. Finally, Jo 26. \_\_\_\_\_ (talk) to the doctors and other nurses about the day's work. She 27. \_\_\_\_\_ (go) home around 5.00. She 28. \_\_\_\_\_ (be) usually late leaving work. Jo 29. \_\_\_\_\_ (love) her job but the pay 30. \_\_\_\_\_ (be + not) very good.

## Exercise 2

Agnes is an elderly lady. She is in hospital. Fill in the gaps in this letter by putting the verb in brackets into the correct present continuous tense form.

Dear Ruth

I 1. \_\_\_\_\_ (write) this from my hospital bed. Four weeks ago I broke my leg when I fell going to the shops and I was brought here to St Kathryn's. At first I felt very unwell but now I 2. \_\_\_\_\_ (feel) much better. The doctors 3. \_\_\_\_\_ (try) to decide whether to send me home soon, but there is no-one to look after me there.

I have a lovely room and am quite happy here. The weather has been bad but today the sun 4. \_\_\_\_\_ (shine). A cherry tree 5. \_\_\_\_\_ (bloom) outside my window and two children 6. \_\_\_\_\_ (shake) the blossoms off the tree. They are very naughty!

I hope you 7. \_\_\_\_\_ (have) a wonderful holiday in Mallorca. Please don't worry about me.

I had better stop writing. The nurse 8. \_\_\_\_\_ (come) to take my blood pressure.

Love

Agnes

Answer Key:

Exercise 1 Answers

1. is, 2. works, 3. gets, 4. checks, 5. talks, 6. makes, 7. are, 8. is, 9. start, 10. spends, 11. talks, 12. have, 13. call, 14. is, 15. answers, 16. has, 17. isn't, 18. has, 19. tries, 20. doesn't have, 21. is, 22. checks, 23. are, 24. looks, 25. phones, 26. talks, 27. goes, 28. is, 29. loves, 30. isn't.

Exercise 2 Sample Answers

1. am writing, 2. am feeling, 3. are trying, 4. is shining, 5. is blooming, 6. are shaking, 7. are having, 8. is coming.