

The Present Continuous Tense in English

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The **present continuous**, or *present progressive* tense in English language is used to talk about actions that are currently in progress or plans about the future.

Example

Explanation

I **am watching** a new TV show right now.

Here, the *present continuous* tense is used to describe an *action in progress*.

I **am meeting** my friend for dinner tonight.

Here, the *present continuous* tense is used to describe *future plans*.

Conjugation

Rule 1: We **form** the **present continuous** with the auxiliary verb **be** and the **present participle** or **-ing form of the main verb**.

As the verb *be* is irregular, here is a table of conjugation of verbs in *positive*, *negative* and *interrogative sentences* in the present continuous tense.

Person	Positive	Negative	Question
I	I am singing.	I am not singing.	Am I singing?
he, she, it	He is singing.	She is not singing.	Is it singing?
you, we, they	You are singing.	We are not singing.	Are they singing?

Note: We can also use **contractions** using the verb *be* in spoken and informal English. Here are the contractions for the *present continuous* tense:

Long Form	Short Form in Use
am (not)	I'm (not)
are / are not	you're / we're not, we aren't
is / is not	he's / she's not, she isn't

Usage

Rule 2: We use the **present continuous** tense to describe actions that are taking place at the time of speaking, i.e. **now**.

Example

Explanation

Look! A seagull **is sitting** on the bench!

The present continuous is used to describe what a seagull is doing at the *present moment*.

Rule 3: We use the **present continuous** tense to describe **plans** or arrangements that have been made for the **near future**.

Example

Explanation

I **am visiting** my parents next weekend.

The present continuous is used to describe plans for the *near future*, i.e. next weekend.

Rule 4: We use the **present continuous** tense to describe actions that are only **temporarily**.

Example

Explanation

He **is traveling** around Italy during this summer.

The *present continuous* is used to describe an action that is taking place only during this summer, i.e. *temporarily*.

Rule 5: We use the **present continuous** tense to describe actions that are currently happening, but not exactly at the moment of speaking.

Example

Explanation

She **is staying** at my place during this visit.

The *present continuous* is used to describe an action that is currently taking place, i. e. during this visit, but not at the very moment of speaking.

Rule 6: We use the **present continuous** tense to describe situations that are changing.

Example

Explanation

He **is moving** to live abroad.

The *present continuous* is used to describe the *change* of one's living circumstances.