

Present Simple vs Present Continuous Exercises

Level: A2, B1

Present simple or present continuous?

The present simple describes what generally happens; the present continuous describes what is happening now, around now, or temporarily.

Present simple: habits and facts: I work in a bank. Water boils at 100°C.

Present continuous: am/is/are + -ing for actions in progress: I'm working from home today.

Temporary vs permanent: She lives in Rome (permanent) vs She's living in Rome this semester (temporary)

State verbs: know, want, like, believe, need rarely take -ing: I know the answer (not 'I'm knowing')

Signal words: simple: always, usually, every day — continuous: now, at the moment, currently, these days

Exercise 1: Choose the correct tense

Select the form that fits each situation.

- Look! It ___ — take your umbrella.
a) rains b) is raining c) rain
- My father ___ in a factory near the city.
a) is working b) works c) work
- I can't talk now — I ___ dinner.
a) cook b) am cooking c) cooks
- She ___ two sugars in her coffee.
a) is wanting b) wants c) want
- These days, more people ___ from home than ever before.
a) are working b) work c) worked

Exercise 2: Complete the sentences

Type the correct form (present simple or continuous) of the verb in brackets.

- The sun ___ in the east. (rise)
- Be quiet! I ___ to concentrate. (try)
- My sister ___ the piano every evening after school. (practice)
- This month, our team ___ on a completely new project. (work)
- He ___ three languages, and now he ___ a fourth. (speak / learn)

Exercise 3: Put the words in order

Click the words in the correct order to build the sentence.

11. Put the words in the correct order: **watching / she / is / TV / right now**

12. Put the words in the correct order: **to school / walks / usually / he**

13. Put the words in the correct order: **are / why / you / laughing / ?**

14. Put the words in the correct order: **doesn't / meat / eat / my friend**

Exercise 4: True or false?

Decide if each statement is true or false.

15. "I am knowing the answer" is correct English. True / False
16. 'At the moment' is a signal for the present continuous. True / False
17. "The train leaves at 8:15 tomorrow" is wrong because tomorrow is future. True / False
18. The present continuous can describe a temporary situation, even if it isn't happening at this exact second. True / False

Answer key

Exercise 1: Choose the correct tense

1. b) is raining
2. b) works
3. b) am cooking
4. b) wants
5. a) are working

Exercise 2: Complete the sentences

6. rises
7. am trying / 'm trying
8. practices / practises
9. is working / 's working
10. speaks / is learning / speaks is learning

Exercise 3: Put the words in order

11. she is watching TV right now
12. he usually walks to school
13. why are you laughing ?
14. my friend doesn't eat meat

Exercise 4: True or false?

15. False
16. True
17. False
18. True