

PRESENT TENSES.
FUTURE SIMPLE & to
be going to

Present Forms

Present Simple

We use the present simple:

- a) for permanent states, repeated actions and daily routines.

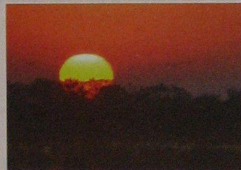
*He **works** in a bank.
(permanent state)*

*He **takes** the train to work every morning.
(daily routine/repeated actions)*



- b) for general truths and laws of nature.

*The sun **sets** in the west.*



- c) for timetables (planes, trains, etc.) and programmes.

*The plane from Brussels **arrives** at 8:30.*



- d) for sports commentaries, reviews and narration.

a) Peterson **overtakes** Williams and **wins** the race. (sports commentary)

b) Mike Dalton **plays** the part of Macbeth. (review)

c) Then the prince **gets** on his horse and quickly **rides** away. (narration)



- e) to give instructions or directions (instead of the imperative).

*You **sprinkle** some cheese on the pizza and then you **bake** it. (Instead of: **Sprinkle** some cheese on the pizza ...)*

The present simple is used with the following time expressions: *usually, often, always, etc., every day/ week/month/year, in the morning/afternoon/ evening, at night, at the weekend, on Mondays, etc.*

Present Continuous

We use the present continuous:

- a) for actions taking place now, at the moment of speaking.

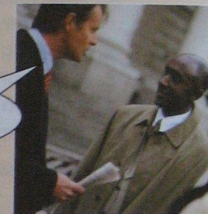
*He **is giving** the baby a bath at the moment.*



- b) for temporary actions; that is actions that are going on around now, but not at the actual moment of speaking.

*I'm **looking for** a new job these days.*

(He is not looking for a job at the moment of speaking.)



- c) with adverbs such as: *always, constantly, continually, etc.* for actions which happen very often, usually to express annoyance, irritation or anger.

a) I'm **always meeting** Sara when I go shopping.

(action which happens very often)

b) You're **constantly interrupting** me when I'm talking. (expressing annoyance/irritation)



- d) for actions that we have already arranged to do in the near future, especially when the time and place have been decided.

*They're **moving** into their new house next week. (The time has been decided.)*



- e) for changing or developing situations.

*More and more species **are becoming** extinct.*

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

Present Perfect

We use the present perfect:

- a) for an action which started in the past and continues up to the present, especially with state verbs such as *be*, *have*, *like*, *know*, etc. In this case, we often use *for* and *since*.

Rachel **has had** the dog for three years. (She got the dog three years ago and she still has it.)



- b) for an action which has recently finished and whose result is visible in the present.

She **has just washed** her hair. (She has now wrapped her hair in a towel, so the action has finished.)



- c) for an action which happened at an unstated time in the past. The exact time is not mentioned because it is either unknown or unimportant. The emphasis is placed on the action.

The Taylors **have bought** a sailing boat. (The exact time is unknown or unimportant. What is important is the fact that they now own a sailing boat.)



- d) for an action which has happened within a specific time period which is not over at the moment of speaking. We often use words and expressions such as *today*, *this morning/evening/week/month*, etc.

She **has taken** fifteen pictures today. (The time period - today - is not over yet. She may take more pictures.)



BUT: She **took** twenty pictures yesterday. (The time period - yesterday - is over.)

Note: We use the present perfect to announce a piece of news and the past simple or past continuous to give more details about it.

The police **have finally arrested** Peter Duncan. He **was trying** to leave the country when they **caught** him.

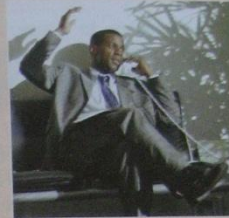
The present perfect is used with the following time expressions: *for*, *since*, *already*, *yet*, *always*, *just*, *ever*, *never*, *so far*, *today*, *this week/month*, etc., *how long*, *lately*, *recently*, *still* (in negations), etc.

Present Perfect Continuous

We use the present perfect continuous:

- a) to put emphasis on the duration of an action which started in the past and continues up to the present, especially with time expressions such as *for*, *since*, *all morning/day/year*, etc.

Sam **has been talking** on the phone **for** half an hour. (He began talking on the phone half an hour ago and he is still talking.)



- b) for an action which started in the past and lasted for some time. The action may have finished or may still be going on. The result of the action is visible in the present.

Her feet hurt. She **has been walking** all morning. (The result of the action is visible in the present - her feet hurt.)



- c) to express anger, irritation or annoyance.



Somebody **has been giving away** our plans.

(The speaker is irritated.)

Note: With the verbs *live*, *work*, *teach* and *feel* (= have a particular emotion) we can use the present perfect or present perfect continuous with no difference in meaning.

We **have lived/have been living** here for twenty years.

The present perfect continuous is used with the following time expressions: *for*, *since*, *how long*, *lately*, *recently*.

Note: We use the present perfect to put emphasis on number and the present perfect continuous to put emphasis on duration.

Compare the examples:

*e.g. I've **typed** four reports so far.*

*I've **been typing** reports all morning.*

Adverbs of Frequency

- ◆ Adverbs of frequency (*always, usually, often, sometimes, seldom/rarely, never, etc.*) come before the main verb (*read, work, etc.*) but after the verb *to be*, auxiliary verbs (*do, have, etc.*) or modal verbs (*can, should, etc.*). Adverbs of frequency go before the auxiliary verbs in short answers.

*e.g. Susan **often** goes skiing at the weekend.*

*Kim **is sometimes** rude to other people.*

*You **can always** call me if you need help.*

'Do you help your mother with the housework?'

*'Yes, I **usually do**.'*

- ◆ Expressions such as *every day, once/twice a week/month, etc., most mornings/evenings, etc.* go at the beginning or the end of a sentence. *Usually, often, sometimes, normally* and *occasionally* can go at the beginning or the end of a sentence for more emphasis.

*e.g. We go on holiday **twice a year**.*

***Usually**, I finish work at five.*

*I feel bored **sometimes**.*

- ◆ The adverbs *never, seldom* and *rarely* have a negative meaning and are never used with the word *not*.

*e.g. I **rarely** go to bed late. (NOT: ~~I rarely don't go~~ ...)*

State Verbs

State Verbs are verbs which describe a state rather than an action and therefore do not normally have continuous tenses. These include:

- a) verbs which express likes and dislikes: *like, love, dislike, hate, enjoy, prefer, adore, etc.* e.g. *I love chocolate ice cream.*
- b) verbs of the senses: *see, hear, smell, taste, feel, look, sound.* We often use *can* or *could* with these verbs when we refer to what we see, hear, etc. at the moment of speaking. e.g. *Jim must be at home. I can see his car parked outside.*
- c) verbs of perception: *know, believe, understand, realise, remember, forget, notice, recognise, think, seem, see (=understand), expect (=think), etc.* e.g. *I expect they will be late.*
- d) some other verbs such as *be, contain, include, belong, fit, need, matter, cost, mean, own, want, owe, have (=possess), require, weigh, wish, keep (=continue), etc.* e.g. *My uncle owns a hotel.*

Some of the above verbs are used in continuous tenses when they describe actions and not states. Study the following examples:

- 1 I **think** he's lying. (= believe)
I'm **thinking** about the plan. (= am considering)
- 2 The food **tastes** delicious. (= has a delicious flavour)
He **is tasting** the food. (= is testing the flavour of)
- 3 I can **see** some people. (= perceive with my eyes)
I **see** what you mean. (= understand)
I'm **seeing** my doctor tomorrow. (= am meeting)
- 4 It **looks** as if they've finished the job. (= appears)
Mike **is looking** out of the window. (is directing his eyes.)

- 5 This perfume **smells** nice. (= has a nice smell)
He **is smelling** the milk. (= is sniffing)
- 6 The baby's hair **feels** like silk. (= has the texture of)
She **is feeling** the baby's forehead. (= is touching)
- 7 Bob **has** a Porsche. (= possesses)
He's **having a shower** at the moment. (= is taking a shower)
- 8 The chicken **weighs** 2 kilos. (= has a weight of)
The butcher **is weighing** the meat. (= is measuring how heavy it is)
- 9 This dress **fits** you perfectly. (= it is the right size)
We **are fitting** new locks. (= are putting in)
- 10 He **appears** to be nervous. (= seems)
He **is appearing** in a new play. (= is taking part)
- 11 He **is** a rude person. (= character - permanent state)
He **is being** rude. (= behaviour - temporary situation, usually with adjectives such as *careful, silly, (im)polite, lazy, etc.*)

Note: a) The verb *enjoy* can be used in continuous tenses to express specific preference.
e.g. *I'm enjoying this party a lot. (specific preference)*

BUT: *I enjoy going to parties. (I enjoy parties in general.)*

- b) The verbs *look* (when we refer to a person's appearance), *feel* (= experience a particular emotion), *hurt* and *ache* can be used in either the continuous or simple tenses with no difference in meaning.
e.g. *You look/are looking great today.*

Future Forms

Future Simple

We use the future simple:

- a) in predictions about the future usually with the verbs *think, believe, expect, etc.*, the expressions *be sure, be afraid, etc.*, and the adverbs *probably, perhaps, certainly, etc.*



- b) for on-the-spot decisions.



- c) for promises (usually with the verbs *promise, swear, guarantee, etc.*), threats, warnings, requests, hopes (usually with the verb *hope*) and offers.



- d) for actions/events/situations which will definitely happen in the future and which we cannot control.

The temperature **will reach** 40°C tomorrow.

The future simple and be going to are used with the following time expressions: *tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, tonight, soon, next week/month/year, in a week/month/year, in two/three days/weeks, etc.*

Be going to

We use be going to:

- a) for plans, intentions or ambitions we have for the future.

*I'm going to become a famous violinist one day.
(ambition)*

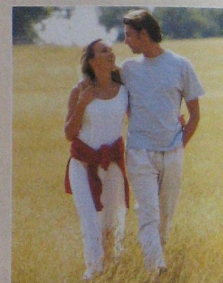


*Now that they've won the lottery, they **are going to buy** a big house. (intention/plan)*

- b) for actions we have already decided to do in the near future.

*They **are going to get married** in three months.
(They have already decided to do it.)*

BUT: *They're **getting married** next month.
(They have decided and arranged to do it.)*



- c) in predictions when there is evidence that something will happen in the near future.

*Look at the clouds! It's **going to rain**.*



Note: 1) We normally use **be going to** to talk about something we intend to do and **will** to give details or make comments.

e.g. A: *I'm **going to have** a party next week. I'll **invite** all my friends.*

B: *That'll **be** great.*

2) We normally use the **present continuous** rather than **be going to** with verbs which express movement, especially the verbs **go** and **come**.

e.g. *Sam **is going to** the market in a few minutes.*

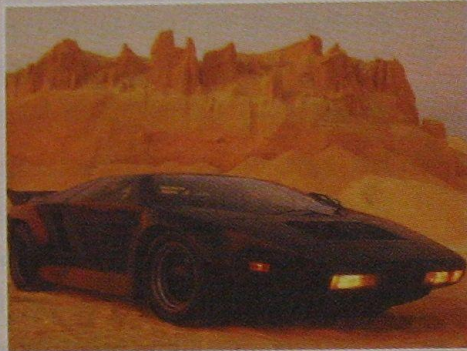
*Sheila **is coming** to my house for tea this afternoon.*

Future Simple versus Be going to

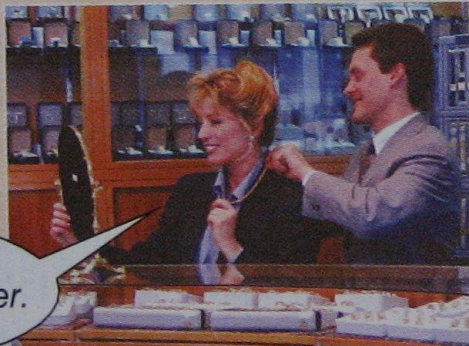
We use the future simple:

- when we make a prediction based on what we think, believe or imagine.

*In the year 2020 people **will drive** electric cars.*



- for on-the-spot decisions.



*I like this one better than the other.
I'll take it.*

We use be going to:

- when we make a prediction based on what we can see (evidence) or what we know.

*She **is going to** cut the sunflowers.*



- for actions we have already decided to do in the future.



Do you like this blouse?

Yes. Why?

*I'm **going to** give it to my daughter as a gift.*

Present Simple

We use the present simple for future actions when we refer to programmes, timetables, etc.

e.g. The bus **arrives** in Liverpool at 7:30.

Present Continuous

We use the present continuous for actions we have decided and arranged to do in the near future.

e.g. I'm **flying** to Lisbon tomorrow morning.

- ◆ We use the present simple or present perfect, and not future forms, after words and expressions such as *while, before, after, until/till, as, unless, when, whenever, if, suppose/supposing, once, as soon as, as long as, by the time, in case, on condition that*, etc.
e.g. Call me **as soon as** you **get** back.

(NOT: ...~~as soon as you will get back.~~)

- ◆ We use future forms:

a) with **when** when it is used as a question word.
When it is used as a time word we use the present simple.

e.g. **When will** they **get** married?

I'm not sure **when** they **will visit** us.

BUT: I will let you know **when** I **decide**.

b) with **if** (= whether) when it is used after expressions which show ignorance, uncertainty, etc. such as *I don't know, I wonder, I doubt*, etc.

e.g. I don't know **if/whether** he'll **move** house.

I doubt **if/whether** she'll **pass** her exams.

BUT: If you **call** her, give her my regards.

Common mistakes

- I'll call you **when I will finish**. X
I'll call you **when I finish**. ✓
- I **have read** this book a month **ago**. X
I **read** this book a month **ago**. ✓
- I **have met** him **two days before**. X
I **have met** him **before**. ✓
- Take a map **in case you will get lost**. X
Take a map **in case you get lost**. ✓
- When was **the last time you have been** to the cinema? X
When was **the last time you went** to the cinema? ✓
- I haven't seen him **since I have finished** school. X
I haven't seen him **since I finished** school. ✓
- I'm **learning** English **since 1996**. X
I've **been learning** English **since 1996**. ✓
- He **stopped** smoking **a year before**. X
He **stopped** smoking **a year ago**. ✓
- Sharon found a job last month. She **had left** school six months **ago**. X
Sharon found a job last month. She **had left** school six months **before**. ✓
- They **still have** called us. X
They **still haven't** called us. ✓
- He **hasn't still bought** a computer. X
He **still hasn't bought** a computer. ✓
She **still is** abroad. X
She **is still** abroad. ✓
- They **haven't reached yet** a decision. X
They **haven't reached** a decision **yet**. ✓
- They **will have returned until** noon. X
They **will have returned by** noon. ✓
- I **used to go** to the cinema **twice last month**. X
I **went to** the cinema **twice last month**. ✓