

# GOLD experience



Unit 1 – present tenses

# It's easier to understand when we **use** the different present tenses if we compare them.

Let's look at:

1. The present simple and the present continuous.
2. The present perfect simple and the present perfect continuous.



When do we use them?

# Function: When do we use them?

## 1. present simple vs present continuous



Do you still train every day?

Yes! I usually work out in the evenings. At the moment, they are renovating the gym in my block of flats, so I'm going to the one at the community centre. People are always playing in the pool! I can't wait until my gym opens again!



Take notice of the tenses used here...



Which 2 actions in the girl's answer refer to ones which are true right now/only temporary?

*It's a repeated action.*

*It's annoying.*

Look at this sentence: *People are always playing in the pool.* Is this a single or repeated action? How does the girl feel about it?

Look at this sentence: *I usually work out in the evenings.* Is this a repeated action/habit or something happening now?

*A repeated action/habit*

1. *They are renovating the gym*  
2. *I'm going to the one at the community centre.*

# Function: When do we use them?

## 1. present simple and present continuous



This is a habit or routine.

These actions are temporary and happening around now.

This is a repeated, annoying action.

I usually work out in the evenings. At the moment, they are renovating the gym in my block of flats, so I'm going to the one at the community centre. People are always playing in the pool!

present simple	present continuous
Habits, repeated action and routines; things that are true.	An action happening right now or around now.
Often used with adverbs and expressions of frequency. E.g. usually, always, from time to time.	For temporary actions.
	With <b>always</b> to talk about repeated actions which are usually annoying.

# Something to consider...



At the moment, I have a knee injury,  
so I can't train.

Look at the  
continuation of the  
conversation.



This sentence talks  
about a temporary  
action, but notice  
that it is in the  
present simple, not  
continuous. This is  
because *have* in this  
context is a **state**,  
not action verb.

1. We do not use **state verbs** in the continuous structures. They are always in the simple tenses.
2. We can also use time expressions to describe actions happening now or around now with state verbs in the present simple.
3. Some verbs can be **state verbs** or **action verbs** depending on the context. E.g.

I **was thinking** about Laura when she walked in.

*Think* here is an action verb. You can imagine the speaker's brain working.

I **think** he's German.

*Think* here is a state verb meaning the same as *believe*.

When do we use the  
present perfect simple  
and continuous?

# Function: When do we use them?

## 2. present perfect simple and present perfect continuous

Match the uses to the examples.



present perfect simple	present perfect continuous
I've known Tim for three years.	Laura has been speaking English since she was born.
You've bought a new car!	I've been renovating the house – doesn't it look great!
I've travelled a lot.	I've been searching for the email address all morning!
I've already finished my homework.	

A state that started in the past and continues to now.

# Function: When do we use them?

## 2. present perfect simple and present perfect continuous

present perfect simple	present perfect continuous
<p>I've known Tim for three years.</p> <p>A state that started in the past and continues to now.</p>	<p>Laura has been speaking English since she was born.</p> <p>An action that started in the past and continues to now.</p>
<p>You've bought a new car!</p> <p>Recently finished actions/those with a present result.</p>	<p>I've been renovating the house – doesn't it look great!</p> <p>A recent past continuous action with a present result.</p>
<p>I've travelled a lot.</p> <p>For actions which happened at an unspecified time.</p>	<p>I've been searching for the email address all morning!</p> <p>To emphasise the long duration of an activity.</p>
<p>I've already finished my homework.</p> <p>With adverbs like already, yet, never, and ever.</p>	

# Function: When do we use them?

## 2. present perfect simple and present perfect continuous

### present perfect simple

I've already finished my homework.

With adverbs like already, yet, never, and ever.

Let's review the uses of these adverbs...



**ever:** To ask about general past experiences or with superlative structures. E.g. It's the biggest car I've ever owned; Have you ever been to Berlin?

**never:** replaces 'not' when referring to general past experiences. E.g. I've never eaten sushi = I haven't eaten sushi.

**already:** To emphasise an action was completed in the past without mentioning a specific time. E.g. He has already eaten.

**yet:** to say an action wasn't completed in the past, but indicate it probably will be soon. E.g. She hasn't eaten yet.



# Form: How do we make these structures?

Look at the example for the present simple. Work out the breakdown of form for the other three tenses.



present simple	present continuous	present perfect simple	present perfect continuous
+ Subject + verb in present simple	+ Subject + am/are/is + verb -ing	+ Subject + have/has + past participle	+ Subject + have/has + been + verb -ing
- Subject + do/does + not + verb bare infinitive	- Subject + am/are/is + not + verb -ing	- Subject + have/has + not + past participle	- Subject + have/has + not + been + verb -ing
? (Question word) + do/does + subject + verb bare infinitive	? (Question word) + am/are/is + subject + verb -ing	? (Question word) + have/has + subject + past participle	? (Question word) + have/has + subject + been + verb -ing

Remember that we commonly use contractions, e.g. don't, haven't, isn't.

In connected speech, this is pronounced /bɪn/, not /bi:n/.

Let's practise!

# Practice activities

Use the correct present form of the verbs in brackets to complete the gaps. Justify your choices.

1. Susan ..... **has/'s had** ..... (have) the same car for 16 years, and it always ..... **runs** ..... (run) perfectly!
2. A. You look exhausted!      B. I am! I ..... **have/'ve been showing** ..... (show) my nephew and niece around the city all day and I ..... **have just got back** ..... (just/get back).
3. A. **Has Michael already spoken** ..... (Michael/already/speak) to Jenny about her birthday?  
B. I think so because she ..... **knows** ..... (know) about the plan to have a picnic next Saturday.
4. A. Sarah got a new coat from the shop on the corner today.  
B. I ..... **have/'ve bought** ..... (buy) a coat from there before, too. They're good quality.
5. I hate it when Timmy asks to see my homework. He ..... **is/'s always copying** ..... (always/copy) me!
6. Where have you been!? I ..... **have/'ve been trying** ..... (try) to call you for hours!