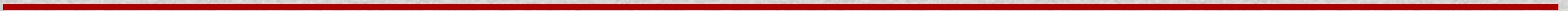


Present Tenses in English

For the Revised

Enjoy your English!



Present Forms

| Present Simple | Present Continuous | Present Perfect | Present Perf. Continuous |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>permanent situations or states <i>She works in a bank.</i></p> <p>permanent truths or laws of nature <i>The sun rises in the east.</i></p> | <p>temporary situations <i>He is spending the week with his mother.</i></p> <p>changing or developing situations <i>She is getting more and more impatient.</i></p> | <p>recently completed actions <i>She has dyed her hair black. (The action is complete - her hair is now dyed black - evidence in the present)</i></p> | <p>actions started in the past and continuing up to the present. <i>She has been doing her homework for an hour. (She started an hour ago and she's still doing it.)</i></p> |
| <p>repeated/habitual actions (especially with frequency adverbs: often, usually, always etc) <i>He always goes to bed at 11 o'clock. (Here "always" means every day.)</i></p> | <p>frequently repeated actions with always, constantly, continually, expressing annoyance or criticism <i>He's always getting into trouble. (Here "always" means constantly.)</i></p> | <p>complete past actions connected to the present with stated or unstated time reference <i>He has bought a house. (Now he owns a house.) He has just returned from Paris. (stated time reference)</i></p> | <p>past actions of certain duration having visible results or effects in the present <i>He has been running. That's why he's out of breath.</i></p> |
| <p>reviews/sports commentaries/dramatic narrative <i>Smythe serves the ball and Lanyon misses it ...</i></p> | <p>actions happening at or around the moment of speaking <i>The sun is shining now. He is studying for the exams.</i></p> | <p>personal experiences/changes which have happened <i>I have lost weight recently.</i></p> | <p>to express anger, irritation, annoyance, explanation or criticism <i>She has been using my make-up. (annoyance)</i></p> |
| <p>timetables/programmes (future reference) <i>The train leaves at 8.00.</i></p> <p>in exclamatory sentences <i>There goes the bus!</i></p> | <p>fixed arrangements in the near future <i>I'm going to the theatre this evening.</i></p> | <p>emphasis on number <i>He has seen three films this week. She has had four cups of coffee since she woke up.</i></p> | <p>Present Perfect Continuous is normally used with for, since or how long to put emphasis on duration <i>He has been feeling unwell for days.</i></p> |

Time expressions usually used with Present Forms

Present Simple

every day/week/month/
year, usually, sometimes,
always, rarely, never,
often, in the morning/
evening/afternoon,
at night, on Mondays etc

Present Continuous

now, at the moment, at
present, nowadays,
today, tonight, always,
still etc

Present Perfect & Present Perfect Continuous

just, ever, never, already, yet (negations & questions),
always, how long, so far, recently, since (= from a
starting point in the past), for (= over a period of
time), today, this week/month etc

For and **since** are usually used with Present Perfect
Continuous to emphasise the duration of an action.

49

Put the verbs in brackets into the correct present forms.

"Well, I **1)** ...*have never won*... (never/win) anything like this before! I **2)**
(only/enter) a few competitions in my life so this is a big surprise. Of course, I **3)**
(watch) TV quiz shows for years, but now I **4)** (think) of taking part in more. The prize is
wonderful. We **5)** (stay) here in Hawaii for ten days now and we **6)**
..... (have) a great time. We **7)** (already/see) all the sights and my wife
8) (buy) lots of souvenirs. We **9)** (send) postcards to all our friends to show
them how we **10)** (spend) our time. Yes, we really **11)** (enjoy) ourselves. In
fact, we **12)** (want) to stay forever."

Stative verbs express a permanent state rather than an action and are not used in the continuous forms. These are: **verbs of the senses** used to express involuntary actions (feel, hear, see, smell, taste etc), **verbs of feelings and emotions** (adore, detest, dislike, enjoy, forgive, hate, like etc), **verbs of opinion** (agree, believe, suppose, understand etc) and **other verbs** (belong, concern, depend, know, mean, own, possess, need, prefer, want etc) *I see someone coming. She hates pop music. I don't agree with you. He knows a lot about computers.* **Note:** **feel** and **hurt** can be used in either continuous or simple forms. *She feels/is feeling better.* **Look, watch** and **listen** express deliberate actions and can be used in continuous forms. *He is listening to some records.*

Some stative verbs (be, love, see, smell, taste, think etc) have continuous forms but there is a difference in meaning.

STATE

- I **see** them coming towards us. (= I have the ability)
- These flowers **smell** nice. (= they have a nice smell)
- This soup **tastes** delicious. (= its flavour is good)
- It **feels** like velvet. (= it has the texture of)
- He **has** a house. (= he possesses)
- **Do you like** his new car? (= Is it nice?)
- I **think** he has left. (= I suppose)
- Ann **is** polite. (= her character is)
- It **looks** as if it's going to snow. (= it appears)

ACTION

- She's **seeing** her doctor today. (= she's visiting)
- Why **are you smelling** the food? Has it gone off?
(= why are you checking the smell of)
- She's **tasting** the soup. (= she's testing the flavour)
- He's **feeling** the cloth. (= he's touching the cloth)
- We're **having** a nice time. (= we're enjoying ourselves)
- How **are they liking** the party? (= they are enjoying)
- I'm **thinking** about his suggestion. (= I'm considering)
- Tom **is being** very impolite. (= he is behaving impolitely)
- They **are looking** at the statue. (= they're viewing it)

Fill in with Present Simple or Continuous.

- 1 A: I **1**) ...*see*... (see) there's a great film on at the cinema tonight. Would you like to go?
 B: No, I **2**) (see) the dentist about my toothache.
- 2 A: I **1**) (think) about going on a picnic this afternoon.
 B: I wouldn't bother. I **2**) (think) it's going to rain.
- 3 A: Is John feeling OK? He **1**) (look) very red in the face.
 B: Yes, I know. I **2**) (look) for the doctor's telephone number now.
- 4 A: How **1**) (you/like) your stay in Budapest?
 B: I am really enjoying myself. I particularly **2**) (like) the Hungarian food.
- 5 A: Why **1**) (you/taste) the stew?
 B: I think you need to add some spices; it **2**) (taste) a bit bland.
- 6 A: Why **1**) (you/feel) the radiator, Dad?
 B: I don't think it's working; it **2**) (feel) very cold in here.
- 7 A: Tom **1**) (be) usually a very quiet boy.
 B: Yes, but he **2**) (be) very noisy today.
- 8 A: **1**) (you/have) a car?
 B: Yes, but I **2**) (have) some problems with it, so it's at the garage.
- 9 A: Why **1**) (you/smell) the roses?
 B: They always **2**) (smell) so wonderful at this time of year.

Put the verbs in brackets into the correct present forms.

Jane,

Thanks for agreeing to look after my flat while I'm away. I **1**) ...*have cleaned*... (clean) the flat thoroughly but as I **2**) (work) late all week, I **3**) (not/have) time to cook any food for you. My dog, Rover, **4**) (eat) a tin of dog food every night and the plants **5**) (need) watering once a week. Tonight I **6**) (stay) at the Hutton Hotel so you can contact me there if you need me.

Donna

Have gone to / Have been to / Have been in

He **has gone to** Scotland. (He's on his way to Scotland or he's there now. He hasn't come back yet.)

He **has been to** Munich once. (He has visited Munich, but he isn't there now. He has come back.)

He **has been in** Rotterdam for two years. (He lives in Rotterdam now.)

44 Fill in "has/have been to/in", "has/have gone to".

- 1 Bertha's not here. She ...*has gone to*... the library.
- 2 I Madrid, but I only spent a few days there.
- 3 "How longyou Birmingham?" "For nearly two years."
- 4 Tom is alone because his parents the seaside for the weekend.
- 5 Julia the supermarket - she'll be back in about an hour.

Since expresses a starting point. *I've been here since March.*

For expresses the duration of an action. *We've been here for three months.*

45 Fill in "since" or "for".

Sue Wilson has been involved in sports 1) ...*for*... more than 25 years. Her first interest was gymnastics, which she has been actively involved in 2) she was ten, but she has also been interested in other forms of sport 3) many years. She has been a keen cyclist 4) 1980, when she made her first bicycle tour of Europe, and 5) her marriage to all-round sportsman Tom Wilson in 1985, she has tried her hand at climbing, sailing and skydiving. Her talent as a writer has kept her busy 6) the past ten years, and she has become familiar to TV viewers as a sports commentator 7) her first TV appearance in 1988. Her plans for the future? "I've been interested in the role of women in sports ever 8) I was a teenager. Now, after being so busy 9) all these years, I've decided to take some time off so I can write a book about it." Since Sue has been part of the sporting world 10) so long, her book should be fascinating.



46

Look at the notes below, then write an article using the appropriate present forms.

For many years researchers - try - determine whether animals - share with humans the ability to use language/One particular researcher in America - spend - sixteen years exploring the degree to which a parrot - understand - what he - say/He - find that the bird - be able to - answer questions about objects and also - understand numbers/At the moment the researcher - try - to determine whether the bird actually - know what it - say - or whether it - simply imitate - a collection of sounds.

...For many years researchers have been trying to determine whether animals

47

Put the verbs in brackets into the correct present forms.

Dear John,

First of all, sorry I 1) ... **haven't written**... (not/write) for so long, but I was on holiday.
 2) (you/get) your exam results yet? I'm sure you 3) (pass) them all since you always 4) (study) so hard. I 5) (wait) for mine at the moment and I 6) (try) not to worry! Well, I 7) (write) from my new flat. Yes, I 8) (move) house! Now we 9) (paint) and 10) (clean) the place to make it look nice. When it's finished, I am going to have a party and because I 11) (not/see) you for weeks I 12) (want) you to come. Write soon and let me know if I'll see you there.

Love

48

Put the verbs in brackets into the correct present forms.

- Alan ...**is flying**... (fly) to Barcelona tonight. He (already/pack) his suitcase but he (not/call) a taxi yet. His plane (leave) at 8 pm.
- Ann and Sally (be) flatmates. They sometimes (argue) because Sally (always/make) a mess in the kitchen.
- "Look over there! It's John Cooper." "Oh yes! But he (look) so different! He (put on) at least 15 kilos and I (think) he (wear) a toupée."
- Ever since the accident Susan (be) afraid to drive. Next week she (see) a psychologist who (specialise) in that sort of problem.
- "What a great match! Johnson (pass) the ball to Green, who (shoot) and (score)!"
- "What on earth (you/do)? Your clothes are all dirty!" "Well, I (work) in the garden all day. Look! I (already/plant) a lot of flowers. I (plan) to cut the grass now.



La Sagrada Familia

Your homework

1 Identify the tenses, then match them with the correct description.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 They are getting married this summer. | a fixed arrangements in the near future |
| 2 The robber waves his gun and everyone gets down on the floor. | b personal experiences/changes that have happened |
| 3 The sun rises in the east and sets in the west. | c actions taking place at or around the moment of speaking; temporary situations |
| 4 The course starts on 10th October. | d actions started at a stated time in the past and continuing up to the present |
| 5 Clare is looking for a new flat. | e reviews/sports commentaries/dramatic narratives |
| 6 We've been sharing a flat for years. | f permanent situations or states |
| 7 They employ staff from all over the world. | g permanent truths or laws of nature |
| 8 Paula has become more independent since starting university. | h emphasis on duration of an action that began in the past and continues up to the present |
| 9 The child has been missing since last night. | i timetables/programmes (future meaning) |

1 ..a.. 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2 Identify the tenses, then match them with the correct description.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Bill always stops to buy milk on his way to work. | a past actions of certain duration having visible results/effects in the present |
| 2 The new serial is growing in popularity. | b changing or developing situations |
| 3 There goes the last bus! | c recently completed actions |
| 4 Scientists have just discovered a way to prevent memory loss. | d exclamatory sentences |
| 5 Andrea has phoned me every day this week. | e frequently repeated actions with "always" expressing the speaker's annoyance or criticism |
| 6 Laura is always criticising my appearance. | f actions which happened at an unstated past time and are connected to the present |
| 7 I feel exhausted as I have been working on my assignment all night. | g emphasis on number, frequency |
| 8 He's been asking to borrow money again. | h repeated/habitual actions |
| 9 The Kellys have moved to Manchester. | i expressing anger, irritation, annoyance or criticism |

1 ..h.. 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

3

Put the verbs in brackets into the correct present forms.

Dear Mr and Mrs Williams,

I 1) ... **am writing** ... (write) to thank you for coming to our wedding last month. I hope you enjoyed yourselves. Sheila and I 2) (just/return) from our honeymoon in Kenya and 3) (now/look forward to) starting our new life together. We 4) (just/move) into our new house and since our honeymoon we 5) (spend) all our free time decorating. The house 6) (actually/begin) to feel like home now and we 7) (gradually/settle) into a routine. We 8) (have) breakfast together in the morning, but then we 9) (not/see) each other until late in the evening when we 10) (get) home from work. I hope both of you 11) (be) well since we last saw you.

Love,
David and Sheila

Have gone to / Have been to / Have been in

- She **has gone to** the bank. (She's on her way to the bank or she's there now. She hasn't come back yet.)
- She **has been to** New Orleans. (She has visited New Orleans but she isn't there now. She has come back.)
- She **has been in** the Hague for four years. (She lives in the Hague now.)

5 Fill in "has/have been to/in", "has/have gone to".

- How long **has** she **been in** York?
- Sheila Brussels twice this year.
- Mum the supermarket. She'll be back in about an hour.
- Sam isn't in the office. He a meeting.
- Mr Smith Paris for nearly three years.

Since expresses a starting point. *She's been working here since November.*
For expresses the duration of an action. *They've been in Hawaii for two weeks.*

6 Fill in "since" or "for".

Animals have been a source of help and comfort to humans 1) ... **since** ... history began, and we have known 2) years that animals make people gentler and more relaxed. 3) a long time the question has been exactly how animals can change people. Some researchers believe that stroking a pet helps to relieve anxiety and tension and, 4) the 1960's, therapists have believed that animals' remarkable powers can be used to heal our bodies and minds. This belief has actually been confirmed 5) the discovery that seriously ill people live longer if they have a pet to care for.



7 Put the verbs in brackets into the appropriate present forms.

- 1 George Smith ...*has been training*... (train) for this match for months. He (practise) at least four hours a day for the last two weeks and he (say) that now he (feel) confident. However, he (face) a difficult opponent tonight. Palmer (win) several games recently, and he (look) determined to win this one too. The match (be) about to start, so let's watch and see what (happen).
- 2 Louisa usually (go) to work by tube, but today she (go) there in a chauffeur-driven limousine. The reason for this (be) that she (just/win) the young business person award, and as part of the prize people (treat) her like royalty.
- 3 Mary (dye) her hair for years. She (go) to the hairdresser once a week and (try) every colour you can imagine. She (say) she (want) to match her hair with her clothes. I (ask) her for ages why she (not/keep) her natural colour but she (say) she (forget) what it is!
- 4 A: Excuse me, I (try) to pay for this shirt for ten minutes. Nobody (seem) to want to serve me. I (try) complaining but nobody (listen). It's the worst service I (ever/experience). Something ought to be done!
B: I agree sir, but I (not/work) here.

8 Make all the necessary changes and additions to make a complete letter.

Dear Sirs,

I write/apply/position of French teacher/advertised /The European. academic qualifications include/ degree in French/Oxford University. I spend several years/Paris/have excellent practical knowledge of French. I work/assistant French teacher/two years/school outside London. I be unemployed/at the moment. I enclose references/former employer and CV. I trust you give/application/serious consideration. I look forward/hear you/earliest convenience.

Yours faithfully,

Dear Sirs,
I'm writing to apply ...

Some stative verbs (be, love, see, smell, taste, think etc) have continuous forms but there is a difference in meaning.

| State | Action |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I see exactly what you mean. (= I understand) ● Peter thinks he knows everything. (= He believes) ● They have a villa in Portugal. (= They own) ● A baby's skin feels very smooth. (= It has a smooth texture) ● This soup tastes of garlic. (= It has the taste of garlic) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● She is seeing a lawyer tonight. (= She's meeting) ● He is thinking of studying Law. (= He is considering) ● He is having problems. (= He is experiencing) ● He is feeling the engine to see how hot it is. (= He's touching) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The room smells of fresh flowers. (= It has the smell of) ● Most people love/enjoy eating out. (= They like in general) ● Peter is a difficult person to get on with. (= His character is difficult) ● He looks as if he's going to faint. (= He appears) ● The patient appears to be recovering. (= He seems to be) ● Sam now weighs more than his father. (= His weight is more) ● My uniform doesn't fit me. (= It isn't the right size) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Why are you tasting the curry? (= Why are you testing the flavour?) ● Why are you smelling that meat? (= Why are you checking its smell?) ● She is loving/is enjoying every minute of her holiday. (= She likes specifically) ● Jane is being particularly generous this week. (= She is behaving generously) ● They are looking at the photos. (= They are viewing) ● Simply Red are appearing on stage next week. (= They are giving a performance) ● The doctor is weighing the baby. (= She is finding out its weight) ● We are fitting a new kitchen next week. (= installing) |

4 Fill in with Present Simple or Continuous.

- A: I ...*am seeing*... (see) an old friend tonight.
 B: I (see) - so you won't be able to meet me after work, will you?
- A: Why (you/smell) the milk?
 B: It (smell) a bit strange. I think it might have gone off.
- A: (you/enjoy) reading Jane Austen's novels?
 B: Not usually, but I (enjoy) this particular one.
- A: Why (John/be) so bad tempered today?
 B: I don't know. He (be) usually so easy to get on with.
- A: Carol and I (think) of getting married.
 B: (you/think) that's a good idea? You haven't known each other for very long.
- A: (you/have) the phone number of a good business consultant?
 B: Why? (you/have) problems at work?
- A: (the singer/appear) tonight?
 B: Unfortunately not. She (appear) to have lost her voice.