

GOLD

experience




Unit 1 – present simple and present continuous

We need to know when and how to use the present simple and continuous in context.

Let's look at:

1. When we use the present simple.
2. When we use the present continuous.
3. How we make sentences in the present simple and continuous.
4. Adverbs of frequency and adverbial phrases.



When do we use the present simple?

Function: When do we use the present simple?



I go snowboarding every weekend in winter. I **absolutely love it!**

Wow! **Snowboarding is an expensive hobby.** I read a book a few months ago about a professional female snowboarder. **She has no money at the beginning of the book,** but in the end, she starts winning competitions and gets sponsorship.



Look at the conversation above. Match the sentences in bold to the uses in the table. One is done for you as an example.

1. For habits and repeated actions.

I go snowboarding every weekend.

2. For facts, or things that are usually true.

Snowboarding is an expensive hobby.

3. With state verbs (*love, hate, prefer, etc.*).

I absolutely love it!

4. To describe what happens in the story of a book, film, etc.

She has no money at the beginning of the book.

Function: present simple and continuous

present simple

1. For habits and repeated actions.	2. For facts, or things that are usually true.	3. With state verbs (<i>love, hate, prefer, etc.</i>).	4. To describe what happens in the story of a book, film, etc.
I go snowboarding every weekend.	Snowboarding is an expensive hobby.	I absolutely love it!	She has no money at the beginning of the book.



We will learn more about state verbs later...

When do we use the present continuous?

Function: When do we use the present continuous?



I'm reading that book at the moment! It's so inspiring!
People are always complaining that snowboarding is too expensive, but actually, **it's getting cheaper** because **more people are doing it.**

Look at the next part of the conversation. Match the sentences in bold to the uses in the table.



1. For an action happening right now, or around now.

I'm reading that book at the moment.

2. For situations that are changing.

It's getting cheaper because **more people are doing it.**

3. With *always* for things that happen often or regularly, and that are usually annoying.

People are always complaining...

Function: present simple and continuous

present simple

1. For habits and repeated actions.	2. For facts, or things that are usually true.	3. With state verbs (<i>love, hate, prefer, etc.</i>)	4. To describe what happens in the story of a book, film, etc.
I go snowboarding every weekend.	Snowboarding is an expensive hobby.	I absolutely love it!	She has no money at the beginning of the book.

present continuous

1. For actions that are happening right now, or around now.	2. For situations that are changing.	3. With <i>always</i> for things that happen often or regularly, and that are usually annoying.
I'm reading that book at the moment!	it's getting cheaper because more people are doing it.	People are always complaining that snowboarding is too expensive.



We never use state verbs in the continuous.

This is usually something you aren't happy about.

Let's consider...

Something to consider...



At the moment, I have a bad back, so I can't go.

Look at the next part of the conversation.



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

1. We do not use **state verbs** in 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 is a state verb here meaning the same as *believe*.

How do we make sentences in the present simple and continuous?

Form: present simple and continuous



I'm reading that book at the moment!

I go snowboarding every weekend.



She has no money at the beginning of the book, but in the end she starts winning competitions.

Look at these parts of the conversation again and answer the questions.

1. Do you go snowboarding every weekend?
2. Are you reading that book at the moment?

Can you make these two sentences into questions using *you*?

How do we make this sentence negative: '*I'm reading that book at the moment?*'

We add *not*, e.g. '*I'm not (am not) reading that book at the moment.*'

We add an *-s* to verbs in the third person singular (*he/she/it*) in the present simple. *Has* comes from the verb *to have*.

Look at the bold sentences in the red bubble. Why does the verb *start* end in *-s*? *Has* is the irregular present simple form of what verb?



Look at this sentence: '*I go snowboarding every weekend.*' How do we make this sentence negative?

We add *don't*, e.g. '*I don't (do not) go snowboarding every weekend.*'

Form: present simple and continuous

present simple



positive		negative		
I/You/We/They	verb (no changes)	I/You/We/They	don't (do not)	verb bare infinitive
e.g. I	go snowboarding.	I	don't	go snowboarding
He/She/It	verb + -s/-es/-ies	He/She/It	doesn't (does not)	start winning.
She	starts winning.	She	doesn't	

The bare infinitive is without *to*.

Careful with spelling in the third person. Depending on the verb, we can add *-s/-es/-ies*.

Open questions require a question word and a longer answer. Closed questions don't use a question word and we answer *yes/no*.

question				short answer		
(qu. word)	do do	I/you/we/they you	verb bare infinitive? go snowboarding?	Yes/No,	I/you/we/they	do
(Where)	does does	he/she/it she			he/she/it	does

to be + verb *-ing*
I am reading that book at the moment.
I'm not snowboarding right now.
Are you reading that book at the moment?

With the present continuous, we make the negative by changing the verb *to be*.

With the present continuous, we make questions by inverting the subject and the verb *to be*.

Adverbs and adverbial phrases...

Adverbs and adverbial phrases

It's important to know where these types of words go in a sentence.



Look at the adverbs/adverbial phrases and choose where you think they go in the sentence.

1 | **2** go **3** snowboarding **4**.

1 beginning of the sentence	2 middle: before main verb	3 middle: after the verb	4 end of the sentence
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1 Snowboarding **2** is **3** exciting **4**.

Now look at this sentence and do the same thing.

1 beginning of the sentence	2 middle: before main verb	3 middle: after the verb	4 end of the sentence
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sometimes	never		
in winter	most days		never
in winter	most days	always	sometimes

Adverbs and adverbial phrases:

Word order

adverbs of frequency

1. Before the main verb.

I **always** go snowboarding.

2. After the verb *to be*.

Snowboarding is **always** expensive.

adverbial phrases

1. At the end of the sentence.

I go snowboarding **in winter**.

Adverbs of frequency are commonly used in the present simple tense, e.g. *always, sometimes, never, often*.

Adverbial phrases often tell us when we do something, e.g. *most days, every day, in summer, at the weekends*.

They can also go at the beginning of the sentence for emphasis, e.g. *'Most days, I go snowboarding.'* If we do this, we must add a comma after the adverbial phrase.








Let's practise!

Practice activities

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

1. My older brother is 21, but he still.....**thinks**.....(think) cartoons are cool.
2. Life in the capital city.....**is getting**.....(get) so expensive. Soon it will be impossible to live there.
3.**Is**.....your baby sister.....**crying**.....(cry)? I can hear a noise.
4. A:**Do**.....your grandparents.....**live**.....(live) with you?
B: Yes, but they.....**are staying**.....(stay) with my aunt right now.

Put the adverb/adverbial phrase in brackets into the correct place in the sentence.

1. I speak French outside of the classroom. (rarely) 
2. She works for more than 10 hours a day. (most days) 
3. Mary doesn't get home until late. (usually) 
4. I visit my uncle. (always/in the summer)
always   **in the summer**