

The present continuous

Introduction



He's **eating** a hamburger.

Definition

The present continuous is one of the two present tenses used in modern English. The other one is the **present simple**.

Construction

The present continuous tense consists of:

subject + present simple of 'to be' + the present participle of another verb - I **am going**.

| Affirmative | Negative 1 | Negative 2 | Interrogative |
|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| I'm working | I'm not working | ----- | Am I working? |
| You're working | You're not working | You aren't working | Are you working? |
| He's working | He's not working | He isn't working | Is he working? |
| She's working | She's not working | She isn't working | Is she working? |
| It's working | It's not working | It isn't working | Is it working? |
| We're working | We're not working | We aren't working | Are we working? |
| They're working | We're not working | They aren't working | Are they working? |
| | They're not working | | |

Uses

| Uses | Examples |
|------|----------|
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To talk about something that **is happening** at the moment

I'm **studying** the present continuous.

It's **raining**.

The phone's **ringing**.

They're **watching** TV.

To talk about something that is in progress

I'm **reading** a really good book at the moment.

We're **painting** the kitchen.

He's **looking** for a new job.

Examples



He's **listening** to his favourite CD.



Are you enjoying your new job?



They're **painting** their bedroom walls.



Our sales figures **are increasing**.



Ben and Sue wear glasses but Ben **isn't wearing** his today.

Note that it is the correct tense to use if you **are describing a picture because we can imagine that it's **happening** now:**



They're dancing. He's wearing glasses and he's singing. She's wearing a dress and she's smiling.

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