

english classes handout
present continuous. the general overview.



1. We use the present continuous tense to talk about the present:

- for something that is happening at the moment of speaking:

I'm just leaving work. I'll be home in an hour.

Please be quiet. The children are sleeping.

- for something which we think is temporary:

Michael is at university. He's studying history.

I'm working in London for the next two weeks.

- Longer actions in progress now. In English, "now" can mean: this second, today, this month, this year, this century, and so on. Sometimes, we use the Present Continuous to say that we are in the process of doing a longer action which is in progress; however, we might not be doing it at this exact second.

These days most people are using email instead of writing letters.

What sort of clothes are teenagers wearing nowadays? What sort of music are they listening to?

- to show that something is changing, growing or developing:

The children are growing quickly.

The climate is changing rapidly.

Your English is improving.

- for something which happens again and again. The Present Continuous with words such as "always" or "constantly" expresses the idea that something irritating or shocking often happens. Notice that the meaning is like Simple Present, but with negative emotion. Remember to put the words "always" or "constantly" between "be" and "verb+ing."

It's always raining in London.

They are always arguing.

George is great. He's always laughing.

She is always coming to class late.

He is constantly talking. I wish he would shut up.

I don't like them because they are always complaining

2. We use the present continuous tense to talk about the future:

for something which has been arranged or planned:

Mary is going to a new school next term.

What are you doing next week?

3. Form:

[am/is/are + present participle]

Examples:

You are watching TV.

Are you watching TV?

You are not watching TV.

Exercises:

- 1) Use the proper verbs, either in Present Simple or Present Continuous

A Trekking Journal

November 12, 1997

Today (be) the second day of my trek around Mount Annapurna. I am exhausted and my legs (shake) ; I just hope I am able to complete the trek. My feet (kill, really) me and my toes (bleed) , but I (want, still) to continue.

Nepal is a fascinating country, but I have a great deal to learn. Everything (be) so different, and I (try) to adapt to the new way of life here. I (learn) a little bit of the language to make communication easier; unfortunately, I (learn, not) foreign languages quickly. Although I (understand, not) much yet, I believe that I (improve, gradually) .

I (travel, currently) with Liam, a student from Leeds University in England. He (be) a nice guy, but impatient. He (walk, always) ahead of me and (complain) that I am too slow. I (do) my best to keep up with him, but he is younger and stronger than I am. Maybe, I am just feeling sorry for myself because I am getting old.

Right now, Liam (sit) with the owner of the inn. They (discuss) the differences between life in England and life in Nepal. I (know, not) the real name of the owner, but everybody (call, just) him Tam. Tam (speak) English very well and he (try) to teach Liam some words in Nepali. Every time Tam (say) a new word, Liam (try) to repeat it. Unfortunately, Liam (seem, also) to have difficulty learning foreign languages. I just hope we don't get lost and have to ask for directions.

2) Use the proper verbs, either in Present Simple or Present Continuous

1. It (rain) all week. I hope it stops by Saturday because I want to go to the beach.

2. Sid: Where is Gary?

Sarah: He (study, at the library) for his German test on Wednesday. In fact, he (review) for the test every day for the last week.

3. You look really great! (You, exercise) at the fitness centre ?

4. Frank, where have you been? We (wait) for you since 1 PM.

5. Tim: What is that sound?

Nancy: A car alarm (ring) somewhere down the street. It (drive) me crazy - I wish it would stop! It (ring) for more than twenty minutes.

6. Joseph's English (improve, really) , isn't it? He (watch) American television programs and (study) his grammar every day since he first arrived in San Diego. Soon he will be totally fluent.

7. Dan: You look a little tired. (You, get) enough sleep lately?

Michelle: Yes, I (sleep) relatively well. I just look tired because I (feel) a little sick for the last week.

Dan: I hope you feel better soon.

Michelle: Thanks. I (take, currently) some medicine, so I should feel better in a couple of days.