**Present Simple**

We use the Present Simple:

- to talk about things that happen repeatedly (routines, habits).
  
  * I often *finish* school at 4.30.
  * Adam *visits* his grandparents every Tuesday.

- to talk about things that are always true (general truths).
  
  * Air pressure *decreases* with height.
  * Water *boils* at 100°C.

- with verbs that express emotions (*hate, like, love*), activities of the mind (*believe, know, need, remember, seem, think, understand, want*) or senses (*feel, hear, see*). These are called static or state verbs (see below).

  * He *doesn't want* to go there.
  * I *need* your help with packing.

**Time Expressions** (Time Adverbials) used with the Present Simple:

- *always, regularly, usually, often, sometimes, rarely, seldom, hardly ever, never, every day/week/month, once/twice/three times a week/month.*

**Present Continuous**

We use the Present Continuous:

- to talk about things that are happening now (at the time of speaking) or around the time when we speak.
  
  * She's *taking* a shower now. (at the moment of speaking)
  * They're *studying* Ancient Greece *this semester.* (around the moment of speaking, not necessarily right now)

- to express current changes.
  
  * More and more young women *are getting* married at later ages nowadays.
  * The number of people studying Chinese *is growing* rapidly.

**Time Expressions** (Time Adverbials) used with the Present Continuous:

- *at the moment, (right) now, today, this morning/afternoon, this year, these days, at present.*

**Stative verbs**

- describe states and are *not* normally used in the Present Continuous (they don't take *-ing* form), even if they refer to things or states happening at the moment of speaking.

  * Do you *understand* what she means?  
  * I *don't believe* you.

Some stative verbs can be used both in the Present Simple and the Present Continuous tense depending on what they refer to:

- *I think she's a very pretty girl. (think here means believe and refers to a state)  
  * I'm *thinking* about my new job. (think here means consider and refers to an activity)*

**Dynamic verbs**

- describe activities and can be used in the Present Simple and the Present Continuous tense.

  * I often *watch* TV. (a habit)  
  * I'm *watching* a western now. (at the moment of speaking)*

**Have**

The verb *have* can be used in the Present Simple and the Present Continuous tense.

- When *have* means possess, it refers to a state and can only be used in the Present Simple.
  
  * I *have got* a new car. (*have = possess*)
  * She *has* two sisters.

- When *have* refers to an activity (e.g. *have a bath, have a party, have a good time*), it can be used in the Present Simple and the Present Continuous.

  * On Saturdays we usually *have* lunch at home. (*have = eat, a routine*)
  * I can't talk now. We are just *having* lunch. (*have = eat, at the moment of speaking*)
1 Read the situations and circle the correct verb form in each sentence.

1 You’re talking about young people in your country. More and more young people **are going** / **go abroad** to find work these days.

2 You don’t know why your friend is very quiet. **What are you thinking** / **do you think** about?

3 You’re talking to your English friend about the weather in your local area. **In winter it’s snowing** / **snows** here all the time.

4 You’re explaining to your friend why you can’t go to the cinema with her. **I’m studying** / **study** for a very important exam.

5 You’re talking about your favourite ways of spending free time. **I’m enjoying** / **enjoy** discs and parties.

2 Use the words in brackets and complete the sentences with the verbs in the Present Simple or Present Continuous.

a Tom says he can speak German, English and Spanish but **I don’t believe** (I/not believe) him. He **never** (never/talk) to Carmela when **she comes** (she/come) to visit us during the summer.

b **I don’t think** (I/not think) **they** (they/need) our help. Let’s leave them alone – **they** (they/do) fine.

c Listen to that! They **argue** (argue) again! **It seems** (it/seem) like **they** (they/have) a big argument every other day.

d Barbara **lives** (live) in this area until she can find a flat somewhere else. **She** (she/not like) it here – it’s noisy, dirty and **she** (she/not feel) safe.

3 Complete the dialogues forming questions with the verbs in capitals.

1 A: **What** ___________ are you eating?  
   B: A ham sandwich. **EAT**

2 A: Who ___________ ___________ for?  
   B: My girlfriend. And she’s late again! **WAIT**

3 A: **What** ___________ ___________ tennis?  
   B: Yes, but not very well. **PLAY**

4 A: How many hours ___________ ___________?  
   B: Usually not more than seven. **WORK**

5 A: **What** ___________ ___________?  
   B: If you ask me, it’s a very good idea. **THINK**

4 Complete the gaps with the verbs in brackets in the Present Simple or Present Continuous.

Hello Ruth!

I 1 **am having** (have) a great time here. It’s really hot! Spanish lessons 2 **go well** (go) and Andrea, my teacher 3 **seems** (seem) really nice. I 4 **understand** (understand) quite a lot now and I 5 **get** (get) to the stage where I can say some things. I 6 **think** (think) that it’s helpful that I 7 **learn** (learn) here rather than at school back home.

Other than that, I 8 **enjoy** (enjoy) myself very much. The area we 9 **stay** (stay) in is rather tempting as there are so many pubs and restaurants around. I 10 **try to resist** (try) to resist buying too much. I can go out quite a lot. My lessons usually 11 **start** (start) at 10am so I 12 **have to get up** (get) early, which is great when tasting the nightlife. You know me. I 13 **like** (like) partying. Anyway I 14 **need** (need) to go. Hope you’re well and not too cold back at home! Keep in touch.

Sees xxx

EXAM PRACTICE

5 Read the text in which somebody compares and contrasts two photographs. Complete the gaps with the verbs in brackets in the Present Simple or Present Continuous.

Both pictures show people at the seaside. In the first picture I can see four people on the beach. A middle-aged man 1 **is holding** (hold) a little girl who 2 **does not want** (not want) to go in the water. I guess she 3 **hates** (hate) water and that’s why she 4 **is crying** (cry). Two other boys 5 **are building** (build) a sandcastle on the beach.

There are only two people in the other picture and they are both in the sea. I can see a teenage boy who 6 **wears** (wear) red trunks and a swimming cap. The boy 7 **play** (play) with a dog and they both 8 **seem** (seem) very happy. In the distance I can see one more person, probably a man. He 9 **is swimming** (swim). I 10 **think** (think) all the people in the two pictures are on holiday and they 11 **have** (have) a good time.