

Unit 9

The simple present & present continuous tenses



Grammar in Context

Theme: Roles and responsibilities

Words by Theme



Read the welcome letter to a transfer student and answer the questions.

Dear Rachel,

Welcome to Class 1C. ① We are all excited to get to know you more. We **are looking forward to** a happy and rewarding¹ school year too! Let me tell you a bit about this amazing class.

Our class teacher **is** Mr Salo. He **is** from Finland. ② He speaks three languages—Finnish, Swedish and English! He **is learning** Mandarin too. ③ He is always talking with us in broken Mandarin. To be honest, we **do not** really **get** what he **means**.

④ We are learning something new and interesting this school term. There **is** less about rote learning and more about critical thinking². For English, we **are moving** away from simple compositions like diary entries to more advanced ones like argumentative writing. For Maths, tangible algebra **is taking a back seat**³ to abstract geometry. Sometimes, when we **are** at a loss⁴, we **help** one another.

Once again, a warm welcome to you and we **hope** that you **have** a fun year with us.

Sincerely,

Cyrus

Class Monitor⁵

1. Which of the underlined sentences talk about the following situations? Write ①–④.

(i) facts: _____

(ii) feelings: _____

(iii) annoying habits: _____

(iv) future plans: _____

2. What tenses do we use for the following situations?

(i) facts or feelings: _____

(ii) annoying habits or future plans: _____



More to take away

take a back seat (idiom) = to have less influence or importance

PART 1 The simple present tense

We use the simple present tense to talk about:

Situations	Examples
Facts or general truths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am from Hong Kong. Hong Kong is one of the most densely populated cities in the world.
States of now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The children are four years old. My cousins live in Mong Kok.
Habits or regular events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ivy swims every Friday. The Olympic Games take place every four years.
Feelings or opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ryan hates broccoli. I want to learn a new language.

PART 1A Time expressions

Time expressions	Examples
every day / weekend / Monday / morning	Thomas washes his hair every other day .
on Mondays / at weekends	I only go out at weekends .
once / twice / three times + a day / week / year	We hold the Sports Day once a year .
always usually often sometimes never	It often rains in the evening in Malaysia.

Use a pronoun for short answers with yes:
Yes, Tom is. ✗ Yes, he is. ✓

PART 1B Forms with the verb to be

Statements		Questions			Short answers		
I	am ('m) am not ('m not)	Am	I	sick?	Yes, I	am .	
You We They	are ('re) are not (aren't)	Are	you we they		No, I	am not ('m not).	
He She It	is ('s) is not (isn't)	Is	he she it		Yes, you we they	are .	
					No, you we they	are not (aren't).	
					Yes, he she it	is .	
					No, he she it	is not (isn't).	

Don't use the short forms for short answers with yes:
Yes, I'm. ✗
Yes, I am. ✓

PART 1C Forms with other verbs

Statements		Questions			Short answers		
I You We They	sing . do not (don't) sing .	Do	I you we they	sing?	Yes, I you we they	do .	
He She It	sings . does not (doesn't) sing .	Does	he she it		No, I you we they	do not (don't).	
					Yes, he she it	does .	
					No, he she it	does not (doesn't).	

PART 1D The third person singular

Verbs	Formation	Examples
Most verbs	+ s	<i>talk</i> → <i>talks</i> <i>pay</i> → <i>pays</i>
Verbs ending in a consonant + -y	-y + ies	<i>cry</i> → <i>cries</i> <i>try</i> → <i>tries</i>
Verbs ending in -ss, -x, -sh, -ch or -o	+ es	<i>kiss</i> → <i>kisses</i> <i>relax</i> → <i>relaxes</i> <i>wash</i> → <i>washes</i> <i>watch</i> → <i>watches</i> <i>go</i> → <i>goes</i>
Irregular verbs	Change the word	<i>have</i> → <i>has</i>

Error Diagnosis

For the third person singular in positive statements, we usually add -s to the verbs. However, we use the base form of the verbs in questions and negative statements.

Success *depends* on hard work. ✓ Does he *plays* baseball? ✗ She doesn't *eats* oysters. ✗

Do not mix up the verb to be, do and have.

- *Are* you come from China? ✗ *Are* you from China? ✓ *Do* you come from China? ✓
- Q: Do you have a pencil? A: Yes, I *have*. ✗ A: Yes, I *do*. ✓

We use the verb to be with there in front position.

There *has* a mistake. ✗ There *are* some mistakes. ✗

Exercise 1.1

Fill in the blanks using the simple present tense.

- Alex sometimes _____ (sing) in the shower.
- Oil and water _____ (not mix).
- My grandmother _____ (go) to the temple once a month.
- Emma _____ (kiss) her mother goodnight every day.
- _____ Lewis _____ (know) how to swim?
- Mr Burton _____ (have) a self-balancing electric scooter.
- Whenever a kite _____ (fly) up in the sky, it _____ (cheer) my day up.
- Edmund never _____ (lie). I always _____ (trust) him.
- Tim's dog _____ (not like) baths. Tim has to chase it down and put it in the tub.
- Q: _____ Molly _____ (help) her brother with his homework?
A: Yes, she _____.
- Megan _____ (not be) a homebody. She _____ (enjoy) meeting people.





Exercise 1.2

Elsa is reading a web page. Complete the web page using the simple present tense.

www.larose.com/aboutus

LA ROSE *by Gilbert Dupont*

LA ROSE (1) _____ is _____ (be) a fusion restaurant rooted in French cuisine. Our chef, Gilbert Dupont, (2) _____ (come) from France, the country with the most Michelin-starred restaurants in the world. He always (3) _____ (mix) the elements of Asian and French cuisines, (4) _____ (push) the limit of culinary knowledge and (5) _____ (create) new flavours. He also (6) _____ (fancy) the idea of inventing new dishes. This often (7) _____ (impress) food critics and they mostly (8) _____ (appreciate) how well he (9) _____ (handles) each ingredient.

We (10) _____ (recommend) that you reserve a table three months in advance.

PART 2 The present continuous tense

We use the present continuous tense to talk about:

Situations	Examples	Time expressions
Ongoing actions	<i>Please be quiet. The baby is sleeping now.</i>	right now
Temporary situations	<i>Steve is working from home this week.</i>	at present
Changing situations or trends	<i>These days, more and more men are choosing to become stay-at-home dads.</i>	at the moment today
Annoying habits	<i>The brothers are always fighting over little things.</i>	all the time constantly
Future plans or arrangements	<i>I am travelling to Tung Lung Chau tomorrow.</i>	next month
Actions in photos or pictures	<i>In this photo, Ada is dancing.</i>	—

PART 2A Forms

Statements		Questions			Short answers			
I	<i>am ('m)</i> <i>am not ('m not)</i>	<i>Am</i>	I	<i>Are</i>	you we they	<i>sleeping?</i>	Yes, I	<i>am.</i>
You We They	<i>are ('re)</i> <i>are not (aren't)</i>						No, I	<i>am not ('m not).</i>
He She It	<i>is ('s)</i> <i>is not (isn't)</i>						Yes, you we they	<i>are.</i>
							No, they	<i>are not (aren't).</i>
							Yes, he she it	<i>is.</i>
							No, it	<i>is not (isn't).</i>



More to take away

push the limit = set new standards

We form the present participles by adding **-ing** to the verbs.

Verbs	Formation	Examples
Most verbs	+ ing	<i>shout</i> → <i>shouting</i>
Verbs ending in <i>-e</i>	<i>e</i> + ing	<i>give</i> → <i>giving</i>
Verbs ending in <i>-ie</i>	<i>ie</i> + ying	<i>lie</i> → <i>lying</i>
Short verbs ending in a vowel + a consonant	consonant × 2 + ing	<i>run</i> → <i>running</i>

PART 2B Non-action verbs

We usually do not use the continuous form with non-action verbs.

Non-action verbs		Examples
Senses	<i>see, hear, smell, taste, look, sound</i>	✗ <i>Your idea is <u>sounding</u> good.</i> ✓ <i>Your idea <u>sounds</u> good.</i>
Feelings	<i>like, dislike, love, hate, prefer, want, wish</i>	✗ <i>I <u>am preferring</u> K-pop.</i> ✓ <i>I <u>prefer</u> K-pop.</i>
Thinking	<i>believe, know, forget, remember, suppose, think</i>	✗ <i>They <u>are knowing</u> each other well.</i> ✓ <i>They <u>know</u> each other well.</i>
Possession	<i>belong, have, own, possess</i>	✗ <i>He <u>is having</u> many pairs of sneakers.</i> ✓ <i>He <u>has</u> many pairs of sneakers.</i>
Others	<i>be, agree, disagree, need, cost, seem, appear</i>	✗ <i>I <u>am totally agreeing</u>.</i> ✓ <i>I <u>totally agree</u>.</i>

Reminder!

When we use non-action verbs in the continuous form, the meaning is different.

- *Joe **has** a lot of cars.* (= own)
- *We **are having** fun.* (= enjoy ourselves)
- *I **think** you are selfish.* (= have an opinion)
- *I **am thinking** about changing jobs.* (= consider)



Exercise 2.1

DRILL

Write the sentences in the simple present or present continuous tense.

1. (my friends / watch / TV / all the time / .) My friends are watching TV all the time.
2. (what / you / think / about / ?) _____
3. (in the photo / Teddy / smile / , / .) _____
4. (the workers / not clean / the floor / now / .) _____
5. (I / not listen to / jazz music / at the moment / .) _____
6. (my grandfather / constantly / nag / me / .) _____
7. (Felix / study / Geography / at university / .) _____
8. (you / are / lie / on the beach / at present / ?) _____
9. (this bag / belong to / Luca / ?) _____
10. (they / take / an early train / next Monday / .) _____

Exercise 2.2

Level Up

Sophie is talking to Joseph on the phone. Complete the conversation using the simple present or present continuous tense.

Hi, Joseph. I (1) am visiting (visit) Disneyland with my friends!

That (2) _____ (sound) great! Have you visited the Adventureland?

We (3) _____ (go) there later. Right now, we (4) _____ (queue) up for the Hyperspace Mountain in the Tomorrowland.

I love that roller coaster! You'll feel like flying past stars and planets.

I can't wait! But Charlotte has a fear of scary rides and (5) _____ (always / whine) about them. She (6) _____ (stroll) along the Main Street, USA instead.

That's a pity! (7) _____ (you / go) on other rides?

Yes, we (8) _____ (get) on the Big Grizzly Mountain Runaway Mine Cars.

That's my favourite! When the mine car (9) _____ (dart) down into the mine shaft, you'll feel that your heart (10) _____ (skip) a beat.

That's cool! And what about you? What (11) _____ (do) at the moment?

I (12) _____ (watch) a film on Netflix. Let me be a couch potato. I (13) _____ (not go) anywhere.

(14) _____ (cuddle) your lovely cat?

Speaking of it, it (15) _____ (miaow) loudly. I'll hang up now.



Let's compare

Present continuous tense	Simple present tense
Things happening now or future plans <i>I am watching TV at home now / tonight.</i>	Habits <i>I watch TV every night.</i>
Temporary actions or trends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> My sister <i>is learning</i> Korean this summer. These days, people <i>are doing</i> grocery shopping online. 	Facts or permanent situations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> My sister <i>studies</i> at HKU. The sun <i>rises</i> in the east.
Time expressions <i>now, at present, at the moment, today, tonight, this week, currently</i>	Time expressions <i>every day, twice a week, annually, never</i>



More to take away

whine (v.) = complain in a sad annoying voice



Grammar Wrap-up

Leo is writing an email. There is **ONE** mistake in each numbered line. Underline the mistakes and write the correct words in the spaces provided. Use the simple present or present continuous tense.

Subject: Plans for our gathering in Sai Kung Send

Hello Jacob,

(1) How are you? Do you busy packing for your exchange visit in

(2) London? I'm really happy that we see each other in Sai Kung next weekend!

(3) What are you wish to do in Sai Kung? I suggest that we go on a

(4) kayak trip to Sharp Island, like what the people do in the photo.

(5) There have rocks that look like pineapple buns on the island! We

(6) may see them when we travelling in a kayak around the island. It

(7) don't cost much to rent a kayak. The rental is usually around \$200

(8) for a day. Do you interested? If yes, I'll reserve two kayaks.

(9) My sister, Tracy, participated in a piano competition next week. She

(10) practised hard at the moment. She usually spends an hour

(11) practising piano every day, but she spend nearly four hours each


(12) day this week. She often studied the performances of some outstanding piano players. Your father is a piano teacher. Does he

(13) has any tips for her?

(14) Alexander and I love playing table tennis recently and we had a match this Saturday. Would you like to join us? Mum is calling

(15) me. She asks me to help with the housework all the time. Let me

(16) know what you are thinking about the kayak trip.



Cheers,
Leo

1. Are
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____



Brain Breaks

It is best to visit Sharp Island at low tide. Why?

Answer: The famous landmark, the tombolo (sand bridge), appears above water only at low tide.



Grammar in Pre-DSE Text Type

Theme: Roles and responsibilities

You are writing a screenplay about a family dispute. Complete the screenplay using the correct form of the given verbs. Use the simple present or present continuous tense.

struggle start skip¹ need lie make not come
ground believe sleep horrify tell leave be

Words by Theme



In a tiny flat in Mong Kok, Mrs Chan is tidying the living room. Her baby son, Joseph, (1) is sleeping in the cradle. Her daughter, Alice, enters.

Mrs Chan: (*Turns to Alice*) Where have you been?

Alice: I was at school. My chemistry class has run late.

Mrs Chan: (*Angrily*) You (2) _____.

Alice: (*Shrugs² her shoulders*) You never (3) _____ me anyway.

Mrs Chan: Your class teacher, Ms Cheung, called this morning and told me everything. You (4) _____ constantly _____ school. You haven't been to school for days.

Alice: (*Impatiently*) Well, I don't see a big problem with truancy³. I just need a break.

Mrs Chan: Why (5) _____ you _____ a break?

Alice: There (6) _____ too much pressure⁴. Our teachers are pushing us too hard. The whole situation (7) _____ me.

Mrs Chan: Stop saying things that are not true. (8) You _____ all sorts of excuses⁵. I'm sick of it.

Alice: (*Shouts*) I (9) _____ the truth! I (10) _____ with stress⁶ these days!

Joseph wakes up and (11) _____ crying.



Mrs Chan: (*Rushes to the bedroom and picks up Joseph*) Everything is fine, dear.

Alice: (*Slams the door*) I (12) _____ and I (13) _____ back!

Mrs Chan: No, I (14) _____ you for this week!



More to take away

truancy (n.) = the situation of children being absent from school regularly without permission

We usually use the present tenses to summarise a book, film or play. We use the simple present tense to talk about the permanent situations, habits or feelings in the setting. We use the present continuous tense to talk about the temporary actions and trends in the dialogue.

- Gemma **lives** on a farm. She **is** the only child in her family. (simple present tense)
- ‘**Are** you **revising** for your exams?’ asked Mrs Jenkins.
‘No, I’m **not**. I’m **taking** a break,’ replied Charlie. (present continuous tense)

Version 1

Eliza is writing a play review. Read the review. There is ONE mistake in each underlined sentence.

Theatre Production Review

Play: *Three Generations in Hong Kong*



Playwright: Tang Ling Ling

Introduction

(1) There are good reasons why the play *Three Generations in Hong Kong* is being so popular. I watched the play at Cattle Depot Artist Village in To Kwa Wan yesterday.

Plot

The play is directed by Isabella Mo. It is a powerful story about the complicated relationships among four sisters. (2) All the members of the family gathered at the ageing mother’s 90th birthday party. During the feast, the mother suffers a stroke and can no longer take care of herself. (3) The four sisters are then taking turns to look after their mother. (4) This change is causing a conflict in the family.

Characters

Mia Chan’s performance as the eldest sister is magnificent. (5) At her first entrance, she yells and created the image of a strong-willed woman. However, as the story unfolds, we find out that she is actually the most fragile one among the four sisters. The gradual development of the plot effectively reveals the character’s traits.

Elements of the Production

The set of *Three Generations in Hong Kong* recreates real-life stories on the stage and complements the performers’ acting. (6) There has a smooth transition between scenes. (7) The play and the reality blended well.

Reactions

This successful production leaves the audience with plenty to think about their relationships with their families. (8) The playwright, Tang Ling Ling, collaborates with her protégé on a sequel to the play. (9) The Forward Theatre stages the sequel in summer. Stay tuned!

Version 2

Correct the underlined sentences in Version 1. Use the correct present tenses.

Theatre Production Review

Play: *Three Generations in Hong Kong*



Playwright: Tang Ling Ling

Introduction

(1) There are good reasons why the play *Three Generations in Hong Kong* is so popular. _____

I watched the play at Cattle Depot Artist Village in To Kwa Wan yesterday.

Plot

The play is directed by Isabella Mo. It is a powerful story about the complicated relationships among four sisters. (2) _____

_____ During the feast, the mother suffers a stroke and can no longer take care of herself. (3) _____

_____ (4) _____

Characters

Mia Chan's performance as the eldest sister is magnificent. (5) _____

However, as the story unfolds, we find out that she is actually the most fragile one among the four sisters. The gradual development of the plot effectively reveals the character's traits.

Elements of the Production

The set of *Three Generations in Hong Kong* recreates real-life stories on the stage and complements the performers' acting. (6) _____

_____ (7) _____

Reactions

This successful production leaves the audience with plenty to think about their relationships with their families. (8) _____

(9) _____ Stay tuned!



More to take away

stroke (n.) = a sudden serious illness in which blood supply to the brain is blocked

protégé (n.) = someone who is taught and helped by a more experienced person