

Lecture One: Basic Grammatical Backgrounds

1. Tenses: Their Functions within Paragraphs

1.1. Present action in paragraphs

The spelling of the present participle

- When a verb ends in a single **e**, this **e** is dropped before **ing**: argue, arguing - love, loving, except for the following verbs **age**, **dye**, **singe**, and verbs ending in **(ee)** like **see** and **agree**.
- When a verb of **one syllable** has **one vowel** and ends in a single consonant, this consonant is doubled before **ing**: hit, hitting - run, running.
- Verbs of two or more syllables whose last syllable contains only one vowel and ends in a single consonant double this consonant if the stress falls on the last syllable: begin, beginning - prefer, preferring **but** enter, entering (stress not on the last syllable).
- A final **l** after a single vowel is always doubled e.g. travel, travelling.

1.2. Uses of the present continuous tense

- We use the present continuous to talk about actions that happen **now e.g.** it's raining. Why are you sitting at my desk?
- For an action happening about this time but not necessarily at the moment of speaking:
For example, John talking to his friend on the phone, he says "I am reading a really good book at the moment." In fact, John is not reading the book at the time of speaking. He means that he has started it, but has not finished it yet. (He is in the middle of reading it).

Note: when two continuous tenses having the same subject are joined by **and**, the auxiliary may be dropped before the second verb e.g. she was knitting **and** listening to the radio.

- For a definite arrangement (immediate plans) in the near future: I'm meeting Peter **tonight**. He is taking me to the theater.
- With a point in time to indicate an action which begins before this point and probably continues after it: At six I am bathing the baby. (I start bathing him before six.)

1.3. Verbs not normally used in the continuous tenses

The present progressive is used to describe **deliberate actions** in progress while the present tense is used to state **habits**. Therefore, some verbs seem to be used only in the present simple.

1. verbs of the senses (link verbs)	see / hear / notice / smell / taste / feel etc.
2. Verbs of mental activity	think (that) / consider (that) / feel (that) / understand / know / realize / suppose / believe / remember / forget / recollect / recall / expect / mind assume / believe etc.
3. verbs of feeling and emotions	want / wish / desire / like / hate / dislike / care / appreciate / refuse / forgive / mind / admire / adore / hope / intend / agree / recognize etc.
4. Verbs of possession	be / belong / own / have (=possess) / contain / include / comprise / weigh / measure / cost / resemble / consist / require / need etc.
5. miscellaneous verbs	Agree / appreciate (understand) / assume / believe / expect (think) / forget / know / mean / realize / recognize / remember / suppose

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2. The Simple Present

2.1. Uses of the present simple tense

- The simple present tense is used to express habitual actions: He goes to church on Sundays. Therefore, it is often used with adverbs or adverb phrases such as: always, never, occasionally, often, sometimes, usually, every week, on Mondays, twice a year etc... or with time clauses expressing **routine** or habitual actions whenever and when (e.g. whenever it rains the roof teaks.)
- We use the present simple to say that something is true in general e.g. the earth goes round the sun.
- It is also used to ask about quoting from books, notices, or in newspaper headlines, or when describing the action of a particular play and opera
 - What does that notice say? ~ It says, "No parking."
 - Shakespeare says, "Neither a borrower nor a lender be."
- It can be used for a planned future action or series of actions e.g. We leave London at 10.00 next Tuesday and arrive in Paris at 13.00
- It is used in conditional sentences, type 1 e.g. If I see Ann I'll ask her.

Let's compare between these two tenses

Compare:

Present continuous (I am doing)

We use the continuous for things happening at or around the time of speaking. The action is not complete.

I am doing

past now future

- The water **is boiling**. Can you turn it off?
- Listen to those people. What language **are they speaking**?
- Let's go out. It **isn't raining** now.

- The population of the world **is increasing** very fast.

We use the continuous for *temporary* situations:

- I'm **living** with some friends until I find a place of my own.
- A: You're **working** hard today.
B: Yes, I have a lot to do.

Present simple (I do)

We use the simple for things in general or things that happen repeatedly.

I do

past now future

- Water **boils** at 100 degrees Celsius.
- Excuse me, **do you speak** English?
- It **doesn't rain** very much in summer.

- Every day the population of the world **increases** by about 200,000 people.

We use the simple for *permanent* situations:

- My parents **live** in London. They have lived there all their lives.
- John **isn't lazy**. He **works** hard most of the time.

Form	Present Simple	Present Progressive
	s es ies X	Am/is/are + V + ing
Use		
	Present Simple	Present Progressive
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitual Actions (adverbs of Frequency) • Verbs of State • Permanent Situations • Timetable/Schedule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions happening at the M.S • Actions happening around the M.S • Action verbs • Temporary Situations • Progressive Actions • Complaining (always, continuously, constantly, continually) • Near Future arrangements

Exercise: Justify why are the following verbs correctly conjugated?

I see him on his way to work.
 I'm seeing my teacher tomorrow.
 I'm seeing the town
 I think that he is right.
 What are you thinking about?
 I'm thinking about my holidays.
 I expect he'll understand this explanation
 She is expecting a letter today.
 They have a new car
Is he having breakfast?
 No, he is having a bath.
 He is at home
 Why are you being so annoying today?
 The chocolate cake tastes delicious.
 Mother is tasting the cake to see if it's good.
 The silk feels soft
 I'm feeling this material to see whether it is silk or not.
 I am feeling better
 You look good today.
 He is looking at the painting.
 You are usually very patient, so why are you being unreasonable about waiting ten more minutes?
 You will like Sara when you meet her.
She is very nice.
 The court is hearing evidence this afternoon.
 The company I work for is not doing so well this year.

Exercise: Put the verbs in brackets into the simple present or the present continuous tense.

- 1 Cuckoos (not build) nests. They (use) the nests of other birds.
- 2 You can't see Tom now: he (have) a bath.
- 3 He usually (drink) coffee but today he (drink) tea.
- 4 What she (do) in the evenings? ~ She usually (play) cards or (watch) TV.
- 5 I won't go out now as it (rain) and I -(not have) an umbrella.
- 6 The last train (leave) the station at 11.30.
- 7 He usually (speak) so quickly that I (not understand) him.
- 8 Ann (make) a dress for herself at the moment. She (make) all her own clothes.
- 9 Hardly anyone (wear) a hat nowadays.
- 10 I'm afraid I've broken one of your coffee cups. — Don't worry. I (not like) that set anyway.
- 11 I (wear) my sunglasses today because the sun is very strong.
- 12 Tom can't have the newspaper now because his aunt (read) it.
- 13 I'm busy at the moment. I (redecorate) the sitting room.
- 14 The kettle (boil) now. Shall I make the tea?
- 15 You (enjoy) yourself or would you like to leave now? - I (enjoy) myself very much. I (want) to stay to the end.
- 16 How you (get) to work as a rule? ~ I usually (go) by bus but tomorrow I (go) in Tom's car.

Tenses Within Paragraphs:

Sample One:

Every morning, I wake up at 6 AM and start my day with a cup of coffee. While I'm sipping my coffee, I usually check my emails and plan my tasks for the day. Right now, I'm working on a project for my company, which involves creating a detailed report. I often find that I am more productive in the morning, so I prefer to tackle the most challenging tasks during this time. As I write this paragraph, my colleagues are also busy in their respective offices, and we are all contributing to the success of our team. This routine helps me maintain a balance between my personal and professional life.

Uses of Present Simple

Uses of Present Progressive

Uses of Present Simple	Uses of Present Progressive

Sample Two:

In the given paragraph, the author employs a variety of tenses, including the present simple and present progressive, to convey information about scientific research in astrophysics. Analyze the use of these tenses in the text and consider how they contribute to the overall message.

- Identify instances of the present simple tense. How does the author use this tense to present facts and established knowledge in the field of astrophysics?
- Identify instances of the present progressive tense. How does the author use this tense to describe ongoing research, future plans, and the complaint about light pollution?
- Reflect on the impact of tense choices on the reader's understanding of the subject matter. How do these tenses help convey a sense of continuity in scientific exploration and the challenges faced by researchers?
- Discuss the significance of the adverb 'always' used in the present progressive tense in the context of the complaint about light pollution. How does this choice of adverb contribute to the author's argument?
- In your analysis, draw upon your prior knowledge of tenses and their functions in academic writing to assess how the author effectively conveys complex scientific information and conveys their point of view."

In the field of astrophysics, scientists are always learning new things about our universe. One widely known fact is that the Earth circles the Sun. This basic idea has been understood for many years and is a key part of how we understand the solar system. However, astrophysics is an ever-changing field, and researchers are presently involved in exciting upcoming projects. They're designing advanced telescopes that will enable us to look further into space than ever before. At this very moment, scientists at observatories all over the world are using these state-of-the-art tools to study faraway galaxies and make fresh discoveries about the cosmos. Nevertheless, scientists consistently come across a shared problem: light pollution. Light pollution from cities and urban areas is consistently disrupting their observations, making their work more challenging. Scientists are continually searching for solutions to this issue to ensure that we can continually expand our knowledge of the marvels of our universe