

Present continuous tense

The present continuous tense is used to talk about an action going on at the time of speaking.

The baby is sleeping.

The children are playing.

It is raining.

The students are reading.

The present continuous tense can also be used to talk about a temporary action which may not be actually happening at the time of speaking.

I am reading 'David Copperfield'. (But I am not reading at this moment.)

Planned future events

The present continuous tense can be used to talk about an action that has already been arranged to take place in the near future.

My father is arriving tomorrow.

We are going to the cinema tonight.

We have already seen that the simple present tense is used to talk about habitual actions. But to refer to a particularly obstinate habit we often use the present continuous tense with an adverb like *always*, *continually*, *constantly* etc.

My dog is very silly; he is always running after cars.

Verbs not used in the present continuous tense

The following verbs are not normally used in the present continuous form: *see, hear, smell, notice, recognize, appear, look, seem, want, wish, desire, feel, like, love, hate, think, suppose, believe, consider, remember, forget* etc.

When *have* means *possess*, it is not normally used in the continuous form.

Incorrect: These grapes are tasting sour.

Present continuous tense

Correct: These grapes taste sour.

Incorrect: I am thinking you are wrong.

Correct: I think you are wrong.

Incorrect: She is seeming upset.

Correct: She seems upset.

Incorrect: She is having a dog.

Correct: She has a dog.

Incorrect: I am liking it.

Correct: I like it.

Note that many of these verbs can be used in the continuous form with a change of meaning.

I am thinking of writing a novel.

She is tasting the soup to see if it needs more salt.

They are having lunch.