

Simple present and present continuous tense differences

The present continuous tense is commonly used with the time adverbs: now, at the moment, today, this morning, evening, afternoon etc.

We have learned that the present continuous tense is used to talk about actions that are going on at the moment of speaking. It can also be used to talk about a plan in the near future. For example, you can use the present continuous tense to describe what you are doing this evening or tomorrow

What are you doing in the evening? I am washing my car.

What are you doing tomorrow? I am visiting my children tomorrow.

Formation of the negatives

Forming the negatives is easy. You just need to put not after the auxiliary verb.

What are you doing?

I am working. I am not playing.

Where are you going?

I am going to school. I am not going to the cinema.

What is she doing?

She is playing. She is not studying.

The present continuous tense is also used to talk about things that are happening around this time.

Read the example sentences given below.

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I'm working on a new project. (I am not working on the project at this particular moment, but around this time.)

I'm reading 'Oliver Twist' this week.

I'm doing a diploma course in computer science.

What classes are you taking this year / semester?

We're studying chemistry and molecular biology this semester.

Notes

There is an important difference between the simple present and present continuous tenses. The simple present tense is used to talk about things that we do all the time. For example, we use this tense to talk about our jobs, hobbies, habits etc. The present continuous tense is used to talk about things that are happening at the moment of speaking.

Compare:

What do you do? I am a teacher / write / nurse / mechanic / housewife. (This is a question about your job or occupation.)

What are you doing? I am washing the clothes / cleaning the windows / watering the plants / cooking dinner / painting the walls.