

Present Progressive Tense

You may think that if you're doing something now, you have only one way of expressing that action in the present tense. But, no, that would be far too easy. You can use the Simple present tense to describe a current action or an action that you perform on a regular basis, such as "I wash dishes." But you can also express the same present action as something that's taking place right now by using the *present progressive*.

You form the present progressive by taking the present tense of the verb **estar** (to be) and the present participle or *-ing* form of the action verb. When you put these two together, you have *to be + doing*. Whoever or whatever is performing the action determines the form of **estar** — which happens to be irregular in the present tense — that you use. First of all, here are the forms of **estar**:

estar = to be

estoy

estamos

estás

estáis

está

están

Yo **estoy**. = I am.

The second part of this structure consists of the present participle, or *-ing* form, of the action verb, which you form by dropping the **-ar** off the infinitive form of the verb and then adding **-ando**. For **-er** and **-ir** verbs, you drop the **-er** or **-ir** ending and add **-iendo**. Use the following examples as your guide:

hablar (to speak) becomes **hablando** (speaking)

comer (to eat) becomes **comiendo** (eating)

escribir (to write) becomes **escribiendo** (writing)

When you put it all together, you get the present progressive:

Yo estoy hablando. = I am talking.

Él está comiendo. = He is eating.

Ellos están escribiendo. = They are writing.