

Present continuous and present simple 2 (I am doing and I do)

A

We use continuous forms for actions and happenings that have started but not finished (they **are eating** / it **is raining** etc.). Some verbs (for example, **know** and **like**) are not normally used in this way. We don't say 'I am knowing' or 'they are liking'; we say 'I **know**', 'they **like**'.

The following verbs are not normally used in the present continuous:

like	want	need	prefer				
know	realise	suppose	mean	understand	believe	remember	
belong	fit	contain	consist	seem			

- ☐ I'm hungry. I **want** something to eat. (*not* I'm wanting)
- ☐ **Do** you **understand** what I **mean**?
- ☐ Anna **doesn't seem** very happy at the moment.

B

Think

When **think** means 'believe' or 'have an opinion', we do not use the continuous:

- ☐ I **think** Mary is Canadian, but I'm not sure. (*not* I'm thinking)
- ☐ What **do** you **think** of my plan? (= What is your opinion?)

When **think** means 'consider', the continuous is possible:

- ☐ I'm **thinking** about what happened. I often **think** about it.
- ☐ Nicky **is thinking** of giving up her job. (= she is considering it)

C

See hear smell taste

We normally use the present simple (not continuous) with these verbs:

- ☐ **Do** you **see** that man over there? (*not* Are you seeing)
- ☐ This room **smells**. Let's open a window.

We often use **can** + **see/hear/smell/taste**:

- ☐ I **can hear** a strange noise. **Can** you **hear** it?

D

Look feel

You can use the present simple or continuous to say how somebody looks or feels now:

- ☐ You **look** well today. *or* You're **looking** well today.
- ☐ How **do** you **feel** now? *or* How **are** you **feeling** now?

but

- ☐ I usually **feel** tired in the morning. (*not* I'm usually feeling)

E

He is selfish and He is being selfish

He's **being** = He's behaving / He's acting. Compare:

- ☐ I can't understand why he's **being** so selfish. He isn't usually like that.
(**being** selfish = behaving selfishly at the moment)
- ☐ He never thinks about other people. He **is** very selfish. (*not* He is being)
(= He is selfish generally, not only at the moment)

We use **am/is/are being** to say how somebody is *behaving*. It is not usually possible in other sentences:

- ☐ It's hot today. (*not* It is being hot)
- ☐ Sarah **is** very tired. (*not* is being tired)