

Present tenses (**I am doing / I do**) for the future

A

Present continuous (**I am doing**) with a future meaning

This is Ben's diary for next week.

He **is playing** tennis on Monday afternoon.He **is going** to the dentist on Tuesday morning.He **is having** dinner with Kate on Friday.

In all these examples, Ben has already decided and arranged to do these things.

I'm doing something (tomorrow) = I have already decided and arranged to do it:

- ☐ A: What **are you doing** on Saturday evening? (*not* What do you do)
- ☐ B: I'm **going** to the theatre. (*not* I go)
- ☐ A: What time **is** Katherine **arriving** tomorrow?
- ☐ B: Half past ten. I'm **meeting** her at the station.
- ☐ I'm **not working** tomorrow, so we can go out somewhere.
- ☐ Steve **isn't playing** football next Saturday. He's hurt his leg.

'I'm **going to** (do)' is also possible in these sentences:

- ☐ What **are you going to do** on Saturday evening?

But the present continuous is more natural when we talk about arrangements. See Unit 20B.

Do not use **will** to talk about what you have arranged to do:

- ☐ What **are you doing** this evening? (*not* What will you do)
- ☐ Alex **is getting** married next month. (*not* will get)

You can also use the present continuous for an action *just before you begin to do it*. This happens especially with verbs of movement (**go/come/leave** etc.):

- ☐ I'm tired. I'm **going** to bed now. Goodnight. (*not* I go to bed now)
- ☐ 'Jess, are you ready yet?' 'Yes, I'm **coming**.' (*not* I come)

B

Present simple (**I do**) with a future meaning

We use the present simple when we talk about timetables, programmes etc. (for public transport, cinemas etc.):

- ☐ My train **leaves** at 11.30, so I need to be at the station by 11.15.
- ☐ What time **does** the film **start** this evening?
- ☐ It's Wednesday tomorrow. / Tomorrow **is** Wednesday.

You can use the present simple to talk about people if their plans are fixed like a timetable:

- ☐ I **start** my new job on Monday.
- ☐ What time **do** you **finish** work tomorrow?

But the continuous is more usual for personal arrangements:

- ☐ What time **are you meeting** Ann tomorrow? (*not* do you meet)

Compare:

Present continuous

- ☐ What time **are you arriving**?
- ☐ I'm **going** to the cinema this evening.

Present simple

- ☐ What time **does the train arrive**?
- ☐ **The film starts** at 8.15 (this evening).