

## Present Continuous Tense

### I am singing- Am I singing?- I'm not singing.

We often use the present continuous tense in English. It is very different from the simple present tense, both in structure and in use.

In this lesson we look the structure and use of the present continuous tense, followed by a quiz to check your understanding:

Continuous tenses are also called progressive tenses. So the present progressive tense is the same as the present continuous tense.

#### We use the present continuous tense to talk about:

- 1. action happening now
- 2. action in the future
- Present continuous tense for action happening now
- a) for action happening exactly now
- *I am eating my dinner.*

The action is happening now.

- Look at these examples.
- *Right now you are looking at this screen* and at the same time...
- *...the pages are turning.*
- *...the candle is burning.*
- *...the numbers are spinning.*
- The action may not be happening exactly now, but it is happening just before and just after now, and it is not permanent or habitual.
- *John is going out with Mary.*
- The action is happening around now.
- Look at these examples:
- *Muriel is learning to drive.*
- *I am living with my sister until I find an apartment.*
- We can also use the present continuous tense to talk about the **future—if we add a future word!!** We must add (or understand from the context) a future word. "Future words" include, for example, tomorrow, next year, in June, at Christmas etc. We only use the present continuous tense to talk about the future when we **have planned** to do something before we speak. We have already made a decision and a plan before speaking.

- *I am taking my exam next month.*

- Look at these examples:

- *We're eating in a restaurant tonight. We've already booked the table..*

- *They can play tennis with you tomorrow. They're not working.*

- *When are you starting your new job?*

- *In these examples, we have a firm plan or programme before speaking. The decision and plan were made before speaking.*

Spelling rules for the Present Continuous Tense

- We make the present continuous tense by adding -ing to the base verb. Normally it's simple—we just add -ing. But sometimes we have to change the word a little. Perhaps

