**Present Tense – Reading Material**

**Overview:**

The earth turns 360 degrees every day. Plants grow in soil

Time passes quickly

You won't pass your next Versant Test, if you don't read up. It is a big deal. Are you ready? :)

I'm not just talking about facts but I'm also making reference to the future. The Present

Tense is interesting like that.

**Objectives:**

This reading material is designed to help you:

* Apply the Present Tense in all its different forms.
* Apply it in specific situations like instructions, commentaries and narrations.

**Present Tense**

Present tense is used to express actions that occur in the present.

**4 Forms**

 [Present](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_simple) Simple ("I choose")

 [Present perfect](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_perfect) ("I have chosen")

 [Present Continuo](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_continuous)us ("I am choosing")

 [Present Perfect Continuous](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_perfect_cont) ("I have been choosing")

**Present Simple**

Basic form

Subject + Verb (present form)

Examples:

 John lives in New York.

 We play football every day.

 You are really kind.

 The meeting starts at 3 PM.

Usage: the most basic tense in the English language. an interesting tense because it can be used to express the future. Generally, though, we use it to describe the present activities or to talk about routines or habits.

1. [Facts, generalizations and universal truths](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_simple#use1)

2. [Habits and routines](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_simple#use2)

3. [Permanent situations](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_simple#use3)

4. [Events that are certain to happen](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_simple#use4)

5. [Arrangements that we can't change](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_simple#use5) (e.g. timetables, official meetings)

6. [State verbs](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_simple#use6) (e.g. be, have, suppose, know)

7. [Narrations, instructions or commentaries](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_simple#use7)

**Note**

Apart from the above uses, this tense is also used in:

 [Zero Conditio](http://www.englishtenses.com/zero_conditional)nal ("If it doesn't rains, I go play football.")

 [First Conditional](http://www.englishtenses.com/first_conditional) ("We won't get our pocket [MONEY](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_simple), if we don't pass this exam.")

 In sentences after **when**, **before**, **till**, **after**, **as soon as** ("Before you leave, please take the keys.")

**Use 1: Facts, Generalizations and Univeral Truths**

We use the Present Simple to talk about universal truths (for example, laws of nature) or things we believe are, or are not, true. It's also used to generalize about something or somebody.

 Water boils at 100 degrees Celcius. Universal Truth

 It is a big house. Fact

 The Earth goes around the Sun. Universal Truth, Fact

 Dogs are better than cats. Generalization

 Berlin is the capital city of Germany. Fact

 The Elephant doesn't fly. Fact

 London is the capital city of France. Fact (Remember: the sentence does **not** have to be true)

**Use 2: Habits and Routines**

We also use this tense to describe actions that happen frequently. For example: habits, routines, tendencies.

 We leave for work at 7:30 AM every morning. Routine

 My husband watches the TV in the evening. Habit, Routine

 Susan often meets with her friends after school. Habit, Routine

 They usually play football on Sunday. Habit, Routine

 Mark rarely visits his sick grandmother. Tendency

 Pinocchio usually tells lies. Tendency

**Adverbs of Frequency**

The Present Simple is often used with the [frequency](http://www.englishtenses.com/adverbs_of_frequency.html) adverbs:

 always

 frequently/often

 usually

 seldom/rarely

 nowadays

 never

 every week/year

 sometimes/occasionally

 from time to time

 every now and then

A few examples how to use them in sentences:

 I always go to church on Sundays.

 I never eat anything after 10 PM.

**Use 3: Permanent Situations**

Use the Present Simple to talk about situations in life that last a relatively long time.

 I live in Boston

 He works as a fireman.

 Margaret drives a Volkswagen.

 Jerry doesn't teach maths at high school.

**Use 4: Events Certain to Happen**

Use the Present Simple when an event is certain to happen in the future.

 My grandmother turns 100 this July.

 Winter starts on December 21.

**Use 5: State Verbs**

You should use the Present Simple with state verbs.

 I like swimming.

 We know this man.

**Note**

Some of the verbs used in the simple form can also appear in the **continuous form**. This is typically when they have an active meaning or emphasize change.

 I'm **thinking** of moving to San Francisco.

 I'm **loving** your new hairdo!

**Use 6: Future Arrangements**

Use the Present Simple to talk about events that we can't change (for example, an official meeting or a train departure).

 The meeting starts at 4 PM.

 The train leaves at the noon.

 When does the plane take off?

 Jerry doesn't teach maths at high school.

**Use 7: Narrations, Instructions or commentaries**

The Present Simple is also used in narrations (e.g. to tell a story or a joke), instructions (e.g. cooking) or commentaries (especially sport commentaries).

 "A man goes to visit a friend and is amazed to find him playing chess with his dog. He watches the game in astonishment for a while [...]"

**Form**

Forming a sentence in the Present Simple is easy. To form a declarative sentence, all you need is the subject of the sentence (e.g. *I*, *you*, *he*, *a dog*) and the verb (e.g. *be*, *talk*, *swim*). Questions and negative sentences are only a little more difficult, because they require

an [auxiliary verb](http://www.englishtenses.com/auxiliary_verbs).

**Declarative Sentences**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject** | + | **Verb (present form)** |
| e.g. *he, she, a dog,* etc. | e.g. *go, make, have,* etc. |

Examples:

A dog is an animal.

I learn English twice a week. The course starts in April.

The man enters the room and looks at the clock.

**Questions**

Questions require the [auxiliary verb **"to do"**](http://www.englishtenses.com/to_do_auxiliary_verb) or, in the third person singular, **"does"**.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Do *or* Does** | + | **Subject** | + | **Verb (present form)** |
|  | e.g. *he, she, a dog,* etc. | e.g. *go, make, have,* etc. |

Compare these examples:

 Person A: **Does** she **like** going to the mountains?

 Person B: Yes, she does.

 Person A: **Does** John **have** a dog?

 Person B: No, he doesn't.

When asking a question, the verb does **not** conjugate:

 Does she **have** a dog?

 Does she **~~has~~** ~~a dog?~~

For the verb **"to be"**, we do not use an auxiliary:

 Is he tall?

 Does he be tall?

Examples:

Does Mike go swimming every Sunday? Do you turn 26 in April?

Is he a lawyer?

**Negative Sentences**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject** | + | **Don't *or* Doesn't** | + | **Verb (present form)** |
| e.g. *he, she, a dog,* etc. |  | e.g. *go, make, have,* etc. |

**Contracted forms (**[**more**](http://www.englishtenses.com/contractions.html)**)**

 do + not = don't

 does + not = doesn't

Examples:

They don't live in New York anymore. He doesn't go to the cinema at all.

Present Continuous

Basic form

Subject + IS/ARE + Verb (continuous form)

Examples:

 He is sleeping.

 I am visiting grandpa in the afternoon.

 You are always coming late for the meetings!

Usage: mainly used to express the idea that something is happening at the moment of speaking. The Present Continuous also describes activities **generally** in progress (not at the moment). Another use of the tense is to talk about temporary actions or future plans.

1. [Present actions](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_continuous#use1)

2. [Temporary actions](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_continuous#use2)

3. [Longer actions in progress](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_continuous#use3)

4. [Future (personal) arrangements and plans](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_continuous#use4)

5. [Tendencies and trends](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_continuous#use5)

6. [Irritation](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_continuous#use6)

**Use 1: Present Actions**

Most often, we use the Present Continuous tense to talk about actions happening at the moment of speaking.

 He is eating a dinner.

 Mary is talking with her friends.

 They are swimming in the pool. Stative (State) Verbs

There is a certain group of verbs that usually does not appear in the Continuous form. They are called Stative (State) Verbs, and if used in the Continuous form, they have a different meaning.

Examples:

• I think you look pretty today. meaning: Opinion

• I'm thinking of moving to San Francisco. meaning: Act of thinking

**Use 2: Temporary Actions**

This tense is also used for activities continuing only for a limited period of time.

 I'm riding a bike to get to work because my car is broken. Temporary Action (His car will soon be repaired)

 They are not talking with each other after the last argument. Temporary

Action (They will soon make up)

 Mary is working at McDonald's. Temporary Action (She is working there only during the summer holidays)

**Use 3: Longer Actions in Progress**

We also use the **Present Continuous** when we are in the middle of doing something time- consuming (i.e. something that takes time to complete). An example of such an activity is writing a book, saving [MONEY](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_continuous) or studying for an exam.

 They are working hard [TO EARN MONEY.](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_continuous)

 I am training to become a professional footballer.

 Mike is studying hard to become a doctor.

 Elizabeth is currently writing a children's book titled *I am the World*.

**Use 4: Future (Personal) Arrangements and Plans**

Sometimes we use the **Present Continuous** to show that something is planned and will be done in the near future.

 I'm meeting Katie in the evening.

 He's flying to Rome in September.

 We're not going anywhere tomorrow.

**Use 5: Tendencies and Trends**

This tense is also used for expressing tendencies or trends.

 Our country is getting richer.

 The Internet is becoming less of a novelty.

 The Universe is expanding.

**Use 6: Irritation or Anger**

And the last use of this tense is to express irritation or anger over somebody or something in the present with adverbs such as: always, continually or constantly.

 She is continually complaining about everything!

 Johnny is always asking stupid questions!

 My boss is constantly criticizing me!

**Form**

To form a sentence in the **Present Continuous**, you have to:

 know the proper conjugation of the [auxiliary verb](http://www.englishtenses.com/to_be_auxiliary_verb) .

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Person** | **Singular** | **Plural** |
| **First** | I **am** | We **are** |
| **Second** | You **are** | You **are** |
| **Third** | He/she/it **is** | They **are** |

add the "ing" suffix to the verb (to form the [present participle](http://www.englishtenses.com/page/present_participle.html) of the verb).

**Examples:**

o try + ing = try**ing**

o go + ing = go**ing**

**Contracted forms (**[**more**](http://www.englishtenses.com/contractions.html)**)**

 I + am = I'm

 is + not = isn't

 are + not = aren't

 he + is = he's

 she + is = she's

 it + is= it's

**Declarative Sentences**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject** | + | **IS/ARE** | + | **Verb + ING** |
| e.g. *he, she, a dog,* etc. |  | e.g. *walking, going, taking,* etc. |

Examples:

I am reading a book.

I am having my first driving lesson this week. He's studying to become a lawyer one day.

**Questions**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **IS/ARE** | + | **Subject** | + | **Verb + ING** |
|  | e.g. *he, she, a dog,* etc. | e.g. *walking, going, taking,* etc. |

Examples:

Are they having the party on Friday or Saturday? Are you meeting David today?

Is she eating my cake now?

**Negative Sentences**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject** | + | **IS NOT / ARE NOT** | + | **Verb + ING** |
| e.g. *he, she, a dog,* etc. |  | e.g. *walking, going, taking,* etc. |

Examples:

He isn't joking.

He is not going to work tomorrow.

**Present Perfect**

Basic form

Subject + HAS/HAVE + Verb (past participle form)

Examples:

 I have read this book.

 The man has gone away.

 John has worked as a teacher for over 25 years.

Usage: to express actions that happened at an indefinite time or that began in the past and continue in the present. This tense is also used when an activity has an effect on the present moment.

1. [Actions which happened at an indefinite (unknown) time before now](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_perfect#use1)

2. [Actions in the past which have an effect on the present moment](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_perfect#use2)

3. [Actions which began in the past and continue in the present](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_perfect#use3)

**Use 1: Indefinite time before now**

Use the **Present Perfect** to talk about actions that happened at some point in the past. It does not matter when exactly they happened.

 I have already had a breakfast.

 He has been to England.

**Remember**

You should not use this tense with time expressions like **yesterday**, **a week ago**, **last year**, etc.

• I have seen it yesterday.

• We have gone to Paris last year.

**Use 2: Effect on the present moment**

We also use this tense to when an activity has an effect on the present moment.

 He has finished his work. (so he can now rest)

 I have already eaten the dinner. (so I'm not hungry)

 He has had a car accident. (that's why he is in the hospital)

**Use 3: Continuation in the present**

We often use the **Present Perfect** when we want to emphasize that an event continues in the present.

 Mary has worked as a teacher for over 25 years.

 Patrick has achieved a lot in his life.

**For and Since**

**Since** and **For** are very common time expressions used with the Present Perfect.

We use **For** with a period of time, for example:

 I have lived here **for** 20 years.

When talking about a starting point, we use **Since**, for example:

 I have lived here **since** 1960.

**Form**

To form a sentence in the Present Perfect, you need:

1. The proper conjugation of the [auxiliary verb "to have"](http://www.englishtenses.com/to_have_auxiliary_verb).

2. The [Past Participle](http://www.englishtenses.com/past_participle) of your verb.

**1. Auxiliary Verb "to have"**

We conjugate the [auxiliary verb](http://www.englishtenses.com/auxiliary_verbs) "to have" the same way we would conjugate the normal verb "to have".

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Person** | **Singular** | **Plural** |
| **First** | I **have** | We **have** |
| **Second** | You **have** | You **have** |
| **Third** | He/she/it **has** | They **have** |

As you can see, the **third person singular** is [irregular](http://www.englishtenses.com/irregular_verbs).

More Examples:

She has never seen my brother.

Neither Mike nor Tom has ever driven a truck.

**2. The Past Participle**

The past participle of a verb is a verb form that appears with the [perfect tenses](http://www.englishtenses.com/page/perfect_tenses.html). The past participle can be either [regular](http://www.englishtenses.com/regular_verbs) or [irregular](http://www.englishtenses.com/irregular_verbs).

**Declarative Sentences**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject** | + | **HAS/HAVE** | + | **Verb (past participle form)** |
| e.g. *he, she, a dog,* etc. |  | e.g. *gone, taken, done,* etc. |

Examples:

We have already had breakfast.

I am having my first driving lesson this week. Someone has just taken my bag!

**Questions**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **HAS/HAVE** | + | **Subject** | + | **Verb (past participle form)** |
|  | e.g. *he, she, a dog,* etc. | e.g. *gone, taken, done,* etc. |

Examples:

Have you ever seen this program?

Have you found the telephone number? Have you ever been to France?

**Negative Sentences**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject** | + | **HAS NOT / HAVE NOT** | + | **Verb (past participle form)** |
| e.g. *he, she, a dog,* etc. |  | e.g. *gone, taken, done,* etc. |

Examples:

I haven't met my perfect partner yet.

They haven't contacted you, have they?

**Present Perfect Continuous**

Basic form

Subject + HAS/HAVE + BEEN + Verb (continuous form)

Examples:

 I have been working as a teacher for 30 years.

 What have you been doing?

Usage:

1. [Actions that started in the past and continue in the present](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_perfect_continuous#use1)

2. [Actions that have recently stopped](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_perfect_continuous#use2)

3. [Temporary actions and situations](http://www.englishtenses.com/tenses/present_perfect_continuous#use3)

**Use 1: Continuation in the Present**

We use the Present Perfect Continuous to show that something started in the past and continues in the present.

 He has been painting the house for 5 hours. He's still painting it

 I have been working as a fireman since 1973. I still work as a fireman

**Use 2: Past actions recently stopped**

Use this tense also to talk about actions that began in the past and have recently stopped.

 I have been waiting for you for half an hour! I'm not waiting anymore because you have come

 Look at her eyes! I'm sure she has been crying. She stopped crying when she saw them

**For and Since**

**Since** and **for** are very common time expressions used with the Present Perfect Continuous. We use **for** with a period of time, for example:

 I have been living here for 20 years.



When talking about a starting point, we use **since**, for example:

 I have been living here since 1960.

**Use 3: Temporary Actions and Situations**

We use this tense when an action or situation is temporary.

 I have been living in Boston for two months.

 I have been working as a waitress for the past week.

**Form**

To form a sentence in the Present Perfect Continuous, you need:

1. The proper conjugation of the **auxiliary verb** to have.

2. The auxiliary verb to be in the Past Participle form: "**been**".

3. The Present Participle of your verb (verb + **ing**)

**Positive Sentences**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject** | + | **HAVE/HAS** | + | **BEEN** | + | **Verb (continuous form)** |
| e.g. *he, she, a dog,* etc. |  |  | e.g. *walking, going, taking,* etc |

Examples:

I have been sleeping.

Tom has been working as a postman for 30 years now. She has been learning English for 3 hours now.

**Questions**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **HAVE/HAS** | + | **Subject** | + | **BEEN** | + | **Verb (continuous form)** |
|  | e.g. *he, she, a dog,* etc. |  | e.g. *walking, going, taking,* etc. |

Examples:

Have you been running?

How long have you been learning English? What have you been doing there?

**Negative Sentences**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject** | + | **HAVE/HAS** | + | **BEEN** | + | **Verb (continuous form)** |
| e.g. *he, she, a dog,* etc. |  |  | e.g. *walking, going, taking,* etc. |

Examples:

No, I haven't been crying. I'm just cold.

His car is broken, so he hasn't been driving it lately.