

Present Continuous

The present continuous verb tense indicates that an action or condition is happening now, frequently, and may continue into the future.

The Present Continuous Formula: to be [am, is, are] + verb [present participle]

Sara is warming up the car while Zeki looks for his new leather coat.

They are eating at Ali's favourite restaurant today.

When to Use the Present Continuous Tense

Use the present continuous tense with the appropriate "to be" verb and a dynamic verb. A dynamic verb shows action and/or process.

Example

Scott's little sister is arriving at the diner two hours late because her roller-derby team, Chicks Ahoy, won the national championships early today. As she is walking into Polly's Pancake Diner, she is yelling goodbye to her friends outside, and Scott hopes she doesn't cause a scene since she is always embarrassing him in public.

When Not to Use the Present Continuous Tense

Do not use the present continuous tense with stative verbs. Stative verbs show a state of being that does not show qualities of change. These verbs can stay in the simple present.

Example

Ali is preferring the cakes over the pies that Ahmed loves.

Incorrect

Ali prefers the cakes over the pies that Ahmed loves.

Correct

Here, the stative verb to prefer shows opinion, and therefore should not be conjugated into the present continuous. Stative verb categories include emotion (to love), possession (to belong), and thoughts (to recognize), and none of these should use the present continuous form.