

Lesson 15

Present Simple & Present Continuous

(used to talk about the future)

In this lesson, we're going to learn about future tenses.

We use the future tense for an activity or state of being that will happen or exist after the present time. For example,

- I will kick the ball to you. (future activity)
- I will be happy when I have the IELTS score I need. (future state of being)

Learning how to talk about the future can be quite challenging as there are many different ways we can do it.

We can use the future tenses,

- future simple
- future continuous
- future perfect simple
- future perfect continuous

We can also use these present tenses,

- present simple
- present continuous

Here are examples of each of them.

Future tenses:

future simple

- I will see you later.

future continuous

- They will be skiing in the Alps over the half-term holiday.

future perfect simple

- I will have finished my essay by Thursday.

future perfect continuous

- By the end of the month, I will have been working here for six years.

Present tenses used to talk about the future:

present simple

- My train leaves at 7.30 pm this evening.

present continuous

- We are driving to the coast this weekend.

We're going to learn about each of these tenses over the course of the next few lessons. As well as looking at how they're formed, we'll also focus on the different situations when each is used.

We'll start with the two present tenses often used to talk about the future, the present simple and the present continuous.

We studied these two tenses in depth in lessons 3 - 6, so I'll just give you a quick reminder of how each is formed before we move on to look at how they are used to talk about the future.

As usual, we'll be doing some practice activities to help you learn and remember.

So, here's what we're going to cover in the rest of this lesson.

- How to form the present simple
- Using the present simple to talk about the future
- How to form the present continuous
- Using the present continuous to talk about the future
- Practice activities

How to form the present simple

Positive verb + -s (-es or -ies) for he/she/it	Negative do/does not + verb (infinitive)	Question do/does ... + verb? (infinitive)
I like apples. She likes apples.	I do not like apples. I don't like apples. She does not like apples. She doesn't like apples.	Do you like apples? Does she like apples?

When to use the present simple to talk about the future

We use the present simple to refer to the future when talking about schedules or timetables.

A time phrase will generally be included and the verb may also relate to the passing of time as in the first three of these examples.

- My sister **arrives** on Friday.
- The show **starts** in 10 minutes.
- The festival **lasts** for 3 days.
- It's **s** my mum's birthday on Tuesday.



Practice the positive form

Practice using the positive form of the present simple to talk about the future by completing these sentences with the verbs suggested.

Practice

open arrive end depart

1. He..... home from Paris tomorrow morning.
2. The next flight to Jersey..... on Wednesday.
3. The new store..... next week.
4. The sale at midnight tonight.

Scroll down for the answers.

Answers

1. He **arrives** home from Paris tomorrow morning.
2. The next flight to Jersey **departs** on Wednesday.
3. The new store **opens** next week.
4. The sale **ends** at midnight tonight.

Negative form

We can use the negative form of the present simple to talk about things that won't happen in the future. Note that I've used both contracted and non-contracted forms of the verbs in these examples.

- Sorry, I misread the timetable. The bus **does not arrive** in 5 minutes.
- The meeting **doesn't finish** until 6.30 pm tonight.
- The concert **does not start** for another half-hour.
- The bar **doesn't open** again until tomorrow lunchtime.

Question form

We can also use the present simple to ask questions about the future in relation to a timetable or schedule. For example,

- What time does the next train **leave**?
- Does the 5.50 bus **stop** near the cinema?
- When **is** your driving test?
- Can you **meet** me for coffee tomorrow?

Practice the present simple

Now practice using all three forms of the present simple to talk about the future in this activity based on a gym timetable.

Practice

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
10 - 11 am	spin	circuits	boxercise	step class	yoga
6 - 7 pm	yoga	stretch	yoga	spin	circuits

1. What time does spin start on Monday?
2. Does yoga finish at 7 pm on Friday?
3. Is there a boxercise class on Wednesday?
4. What time does the step class end on Thursday?

Scroll down for the answers.

Answers

1. What time does spin start on Monday?

Spin **starts** at 10 am on Monday.

2. Does yoga finish at 7 pm on Friday?

No, yoga **doesn't finish** at 7 pm on Friday.

Or, if you used the positive instead of the negative in your answer:

No, yoga **finishes** at 11 am on Friday.

3. Is there a boxercise class on Wednesday?

Yes, there **is** a boxercise class on Wednesday.

4. What time does the step class end on Thursday?

The step class **ends** at 11 am on Thursday.

How to form the present continuous

We'll now move on to the look at how we can use the present continuous to talk about the future.

Here's a quick reminder of how to form it.

Positive am/is/are + verb + ing	Negative am/is/are not + verb + ing	Question am/is/are ...+ verb + ing?
I am walking to work today. You are eating pizza. He is doing his homework.	I am not walking to work today. I'm not walking to work today. You are not eating pizza. You aren't eating pizza. He is not doing his homework. He isn't doing his homework.	Are you walking to work today? Are you eating pizza? Is he doing his homework?

When to use the present continuous to talk about the future

We use the present continuous to talk about a definite arrangement or plan for the future. For example,

1. Next week they **are flying** to Beijing.
2. Tomorrow we **'re visiting** the British Museum.
3. On Saturday I **'m going** to dinner with friends.
4. She **is taking** her driving test at 3.30 this afternoon.

Note that, as with the sample present simple sentences, all these sentences include a time expression to show that the action will happen in the future.

Sometimes when using the present continuous, the timeframe is not given. However, it is understood from the context of the conversation or text that the event will happen in the future, not the present. For example,

1. We **re staying** in a really posh hotel.

(We'll be staying in a posh hotel when we go on holiday.)

2. I **m having** the prawn risotto.

(I'm going to order the prawn risotto for my meal.)

3. She **'s taking** the train to York.

(She will travel by train when she goes to York.)

In all of these sample sentences, the positive verb form can be changed to the negative form to talk about things that won't happen in the future. For example,

1. Tomorrow we **are not visiting** the British Museum.

2. She **is not taking** her driving test at 3.30 this afternoon because the tester is ill.

3. I **m not having** the prawn risotto. I've decided on the steak instead.

4. She **isn't taking** the train to York. She's going to fly there as it's quicker.

Practice the present continuous

Practice using the present continuous to talk about the future by answering these questions using the verbs suggested and the photo prompts.

Two of the questions require a positive answer and the other two a negative answer.

Practice



1. Are you going to Omelah's party on Saturday?
2. Is Gino buying a new suit for his friend's wedding?
3. Are they booking a cruise for their wedding anniversary?
4. Are you playing in the golf tournament at the weekend?

Scroll down for the answers.

Answers

1. Yes, I **am going** to Omelah's party on Saturday.
2. No, Gino **isn't buying** a new suit for his friend's wedding.
3. Yes, they **are booking** a cruise for their wedding anniversary.
4. No, I'm **not playing** in the golf tournament at the weekend.

Present simple vs Present Continuous

To finish this lesson, I want to give you some extra guidance on when to use the present simple and when to use the present continuous when talking about future plans.

In many situations, both can be used.

However, as a general rule, if the activity or event is scheduled for a specific time, use the **present simple**. If it is not scheduled for a specific time, the **present continuous** usually sounds more natural. For example,

Present simple	Present continuous
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• My flight <u>leaves</u> at 8 pm tonight.• Term <u>ends</u> on 22nd July.• Her train <u>arrives</u> at 2.45 pm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I'm <u>flying</u> to Paris next week.• The term <u>is ending</u> soon.• She's <u>arriving</u> this afternoon.

Practice

present simple or present continuous

To practice choosing the right verb structure to talk about the future, choose the correct verb form to complete these sentences.

Practice

1. We cycle / are cycling to the park this afternoon.
2. The movie begins / is beginning in 10 minutes.
3. The café opens / is opening at 9.30 am.
4. He runs / is running / to catch the bus.

Scroll down for the answers.

Answers

1. We **are cycling** to the park this afternoon.
2. The movie **begins** in 10 minutes.
3. The café **opens** at 9.30 am.
4. He **is running** to catch the bus.

Summary

Now that we know how to use the present simple and present continuous to talk about the future, we're ready to move onto the future tenses themselves. First, here's what we've covered in this lesson.

1. How to form the present simple
2. Using the present simple to talk about the future
3. How to form the present continuous
4. Using the present continuous to talk about the future
5. Practice activities

