



## [Understanding the Simple Present Tense](#)

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The present simple tense is typically one of the first verb tenses that new English students learn. It is used to describe action that takes place on a regular basis. The present simple also can be used to express feelings, facts, opinion, and time-based events. Don't confuse the present simple tense with the present continuous tense, which is used to describe something that is currently taking place. For example:

Present simple tense: I catch the bus at 8:50 a.m. to go to work.

Present continuous tense: I am riding the bus to work.

### Practicing the Present Simple Tense

One good way to improve your English speaking skills is to use role-playing exercises. With a classmate or a friend, try using the following dialogue to practice the present simple tense.

Mark: Hello, Can I ask you some questions for an interview?

Jennifer: Yes, I can answer some questions.

Mark: Thank you for taking the time. Now, first question: What do you do?

Jennifer: I work in a library. I'm a librarian.

Mark: Are you married?

Jennifer: Yes, I am.

Mark: What does your husband do?

Jennifer: He works as a policeman.

Mark: Do you usually have dinner together?

Jennifer: Yes, we do.



Mark: How often does your husband exercise?

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Jennifer: He sometimes exercises four times a week. But, he usually exercises only twice a week.

Mark: Where do you like going on holiday?

Jennifer: We rarely go on holiday. However, we like going to the mountains if we can.

Mark: What type of books do you read?

Jennifer: I often read horror stories.

Mark: Thank you very much for answering my questions.

Jennifer: You're welcome!

#### When To Use

Notice from the above dialogue and following chart that the present simple is often used to describe what we do every day. We use verbs of frequency (always, sometimes, usually, etc.) which indicate a habit. Other instances that call for the present simple tense include:

Permanent or long-lasting situations

Where do you work?

The store opens at 9 a.m.

She lives in New York.

Regular habits and daily routines

I usually get up at 7 a.m.

She doesn't often go to the cinema.

When do they usually have lunch?

Facts

The earth revolves around the sun.

What does "strange" mean?



Water doesn't boil at 20 degrees.

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### Feelings

I love walking around late at night during the summer.

She hates flying!

I don't want to live in Texas.

Opinions and states of mind

He doesn't agree with you.

I think he is a wonderful student.

What do you consider your best accomplishment?

Timetables and schedules

The plane leaves at 4 p.m.

When do courses begin this semester?

The train doesn't arrive until 10.35 a.m.

### Verb Conjugation

The present simple tense can be expressed in three ways: positive, negative, or as a question. Conjugating the positive form is easy for the first- and second-person references such as "I" or "you." Just use the root form of the verb. For third-person references, add an "s" to the verb. For example:

I eat lunch at noon.

You play tennis at noon.

He walks to school every day.

She watches TV in the evening.

It sleeps under the couch.

We study English at school

They eat lunch at noon.



The negative form uses the helping verb "do" for first- and second-person references and "does" for the third-person. You can also express the negative form as a contraction. For example:

I do not leave work early on Mondays.

You don't like to watch TV.

He does not understand the question.

She doesn't ride a bike.

We do not have any money.

They don't leave at noon.

If the present simple tense is expressed in the form of a question, use "do" or "does," followed by the subject, and the verb in questions. For example:

Do I work in this company?

Do you get up early?

Do we often drive to work?

Do they understand French?

Does he like to watch TV?

Does she believe in ghosts?

Does it leave at noon?