

Present continuous and present simple 2
(I am doing and I do)

A

We use continuous forms for actions and happenings that have started but not finished (they **are eating** / it **is raining** etc.). Some verbs (for example, **know** and **like**) are not normally used in this way. We don't say 'I am knowing' or 'they are liking'; we say 'I **know**', 'they **like**'.

The following verbs are not normally used in the present continuous:

like love hate want need prefer
know realise suppose mean understand believe remember
belong fit contain consist seem

- ☐ I'm hungry. I **want** something to eat. (*not* I'm wanting)
- ☐ Do you **understand** what I **mean**?
- ☐ Ann **doesn't seem** very happy at the moment.

B

Think

When **think** means 'believe' or 'have an opinion', we do not use the continuous:

- ☐ I **think** Mary is Canadian, but I'm not sure. (*not* I'm thinking)
- ☐ What do you **think** about my plan? (= What is your opinion?)

When **think** means 'consider', the continuous is possible:

- ☐ I'm **thinking** about what happened. I often **think** about it.
- ☐ Nicky **is thinking** of giving up her job. (= she is considering it)

C

He is selfish and He is being selfish

He's **being** = He's behaving / He's acting. Compare:

- ☐ I can't understand why he's **being** so selfish. He isn't usually like that.
(**being** selfish = behaving selfishly at the moment)
- ☐ He never thinks about other people. He **is** very selfish. (*not* He is being)
(= He is selfish generally, not only at the moment)

We use **am/is/are being** to say how somebody is *behaving*. It is not usually possible in other sentences:

- ☐ It's hot today. (*not* It is being hot)
- ☐ Sarah **is** very tired. (*not* is being tired)

D

See hear smell taste

We normally use the present simple (not continuous) with these verbs:

- ☐ Do you **see** that man over there? (*not* Are you seeing)
- ☐ This room **smells**. Let's open a window.

We often use **can + see/hear/smell/taste**:

- ☐ I **can hear** a strange noise. **Can** you **hear** it?

E

Look feel

You can use the present simple or continuous to say how somebody looks or feels now:

- ☐ You **look** well today. *or* You're **looking** well today.
- ☐ How do you **feel** now? *or* How are you **feeling** now?

but

- ☐ I usually **feel** tired in the morning. (*not* I'm usually feeling)

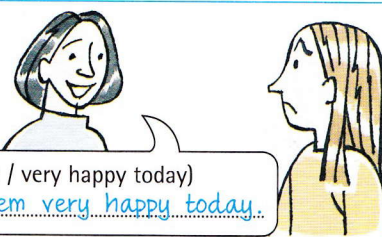
Exercises

Unit 4

4.1 Are the underlined verbs right or wrong? Correct them where necessary.

- 1 Nicky is thinking of giving up her job. OK
- 2 Are you believing in God?
- 3 I'm feeling hungry. Is there anything to eat?
- 4 This sauce is great. It's tasting really good.
- 5 I'm thinking this is your key. Am I right?

4.2 Use the words in brackets to make sentences. (You should also study Unit 3 before you do this exercise.)

<p>1</p>  <p>(you / not / seem / very happy today) <u>You don't seem very happy today.</u></p>	<p>2</p>  <p>(what / you / do?) Be quiet! (I / think)</p>
<p>3</p>  <p>(who / this umbrella / belong to?) I have no idea.</p>	<p>4</p>  <p>(the dinner / smell / good)</p>
<p>5</p>  <p>Excuse me. (anybody / sit / there?) No, it's free.</p>	<p>6</p>  <p>(these gloves / not / fit / me) They're too small.</p>

4.3 Put the verb into the correct form, present continuous or present simple.

- 1 Are you hungry? Do you want (you / want) something to eat?
- 2 Don't put the dictionary away. I (use) it.
- 3 Don't put the dictionary away. I (need) it.
- 4 Who is that man? What (he / want)?
- 5 Who is that man? Why (he / look) at us?
- 6 Alan says he's 80 years old, but nobody (believe) him.
- 7 She told me her name, but I (not / remember) it now.
- 8 I (think) of selling my car. Would you be interested in buying it?
- 9 I (think) you should sell your car. You (not / use) it very often.
- 10 Air (consist) mainly of nitrogen and oxygen.

4.4 Complete the sentences using the most suitable form of be. Sometimes you must use the simple (am/is/are) and sometimes the continuous is more suitable (am/is/are being).

- 1 I can't understand why he's being so selfish. He isn't usually like that.
- 2 Sarah very nice to me at the moment. I wonder why.
- 3 You'll like Debbie when you meet her. She very nice.
- 4 You're usually very patient, so why so unreasonable about waiting ten more minutes?
- 5 Why isn't Steve at work today? ill?