

A BRIEF ENGLISH LESSON: SEPTEMBER

This month's lesson looks at the present tenses in English. As you no doubt know, there are *two* present tenses – or time forms – in English:

1. The **Present Continuous**: *I **am working***
 *We / you / they **are working***
 *She / he / it **is working***

2. The **Present Simple** *I / you / we / they **work***
 *She / he / it **works***

Once you have learned the difference in *form*, you need to understand the difference in *use*. When should you use the present *continuous* instead of the present *simple*, and vice versa?! Study the differences in the table below and then try the exercise.

PRESENT CONTINUOUS	PRESENT SIMPLE
Expresses the PRESENT - an activity that is in the middle of happening <i>at the moment of speaking</i> . Look! It's <i>snowing</i> ! She's <i>sitting</i> over there.	Expresses NO PARTICULAR TIME - an activity that happens regularly. <i>Do you smoke?</i> <i>He plays</i> chess very well.
Describes a TEMPORARY activity. She's <i>living</i> with her mother until the house is ready. He's <i>working</i> on his car.	Describes a PERMANENT activity. They <i>live</i> in Bournemouth. He <i>works</i> for a bank.
Can ONLY express an ACTIVITY. He's <i>having</i> a break She's <i>thinking</i> about him.	Can express a REGULAR activity or a STATE. He always <i>has</i> a break at ten. (activity) He <i>has</i> four dogs. (possession) She <i>thinks</i> about him a lot. (activity) I <i>think</i> it' s good. (opinion)
Often used with words like: NOW, AT THE MOMENT, TODAY, THIS WEEK, THIS MONTH, FOR THE TIME BEING etc	Often used with words like: ALWAYS, USUALLY, OFTEN, SELDOM, SOMETIMES, NEVER, ON SUNDAYS, TWICE A WEEK, ONCE A WEEK, EVERYDAY etc...,

READY TO TEST YOURSELF?

Put the verb in brackets into the correct time form - *present continuous* or *present simple*.

1. What part of Switzerland (you COME) from?
2. John (WORK) hard for his exam, which is in 4 weeks.
3. Public transport (WORK) very well in Switzerland.
4. Whenever you (ANSWER) the phone, you should say your name.
5. She (GO) through a rather difficult phase at the moment.
6. Sorry about the smell! We (HAVE) our house painted.
7. She often (ARRIVE) late in the morning.
8. Have you seen? It (RAIN) again.
9. We usually (WATCH) the news at 7.30 in the evening.
10. At work, I (ANSWER) the phone, (WRITE) letters
and (DO) all the usual secretarial work.
11. How' s life? We (ENJOY) a spell of very hot weather,
which makes it difficult to concentrate on work!
12. I (GO) jogging and (PLAY) tennis when I have time.
13. He (MAKE) a lot of progress in his new school.
14. They (BUILD) a new football stadium for the championship next
year.

AND THE ANSWERS?

1. What part of Switzerland **do** you **come** from?
2. John **is working** hard for his exam, which is in 4 weeks.
3. Public transport **works** very well in Switzerland.
4. Whenever you **answer** the phone, you should say your name.
5. She **is going** through a rather difficult phase at the moment.
6. Sorry about the smell! We **are having** our house painted.
7. She often **arrives** late in the morning.
8. Have you seen? It's **raining** again.
9. We usually **watch** the news at 7.30 in the evening.
10. At work, I **answer** the phone, **write** letters and **do** all the usual secretarial work.
11. How' s life? We **are enjoying** a spell of very hot weather, which makes it difficult to concentrate on work!
12. I **go** jogging and **play** tennis when I have time.
13. He **is making** a lot of progress in his new school.
14. They **are building** a new football stadium for the championship next year.