**Forming the present continuous**

The present continuous of any verb is composed of two parts - *the present tense of the verb to be + the present participle of the main verb.*

(The form of the present participle is:*base+ing, e.g. talking, playing, moving, smiling)*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Affirmative** | | |
| Subject | + ***to be*** | **+ base + *ing*** |
| She | is | talking. |
| **Negative** | | |
| Subject | **+ *to be + not*** | **+ base + *ing*** |
| She | is not (isn't) | talking |
| **- *I'm not doing that. -You aren't listening.*(or *You're not listening.*) *-They aren't coming to the party.*(or *They're not coming to the party.*) *-She isn't going home until Monday.*(or *She's not going home until Monday.*)**  **Interrogative** | | |
| ***to be*** | **+ subject** | **+ base + *ing*** |
| Is | she | talking? |

**Examples: TO GO, present continuous**

| **Affirmative** | **Negative** | **Interrogative** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **I** am going | I am not going | Am I going? |
| **You** are going | You aren't going. | Are you going? |
| **He, she, it**is going | He, she, it isn't going | Is he, she, it going? |
| **We** are going | We aren't going | Are we going? |
| **You** are going | You aren't going | Are you going? |
| **They** are going | They aren't going | Are they going? |

**Note**: alternative negative contractions: *I'm not going, you're not going, he's not going etc.*

**Functions of the present continuous**

As with all tenses in English, the ***speaker's attitude***is as important as the time of the action or event. When someone uses the present continuous, they are thinking about something that is ***unfinished or incomplete***

* *!* *We also use the present continuous to talk about:*
* *something which is happening****before******and******after******a specific time****:*
* *At eight o'clock we****are****usually****having****breakfast.  
  When I get home the children****are doing****their homework.*
* *something which****we think is temporary****:*
* *Michael is at university. He****'s studying****history.  
  I****'m working****in London for the next two weeks.*
* *something which is****new****and****contrasts****with a previous state:*
* *These days most people****are using****email instead of writing letters.  
  What sort of clothes****are****teenagers****wearing****nowadays?  
  What sort of music****are****they****listening****to?*
* *something which is changing, growing or developing:*
* *The children****are growing up****quickly.  
  The climate****is changing****rapidly.  
  Your English****is improving****.*
* *something which happens****again and again****:*
* *It****'s always raining****in London.  
  They****are always arguing****.  
  George is great. He****'s always laughing****.*
* *Note that we normally use always with this use.*

**Be careful:** Some verbs are not usually used in the continuous form

**Verbs that are not usually used in the continuous form**

The verbs in the list below are normally used in the simple form because they refer to ***states***, rather than actions or processes.

**Senses / perception**

* to feel\*
* to hear
* to see\*
* to smell
* to taste

**Opinion**

* to assume
* to believe
* to consider
* to doubt
* to feel (= to think)
* to find (= to consider)
* to suppose
* to think\*

**Mental states**

* to forget
* to imagine
* to know
* to mean
* to notice
* to recognise
* to remember
* to understand

**Emotions / desires**

* to envy
* to fear
* to dislike
* to hate
* to hope
* to like
* to love
* to mind
* to prefer
* to regret
* to want
* to wish

**Measurement**

* to contain
* to cost
* to hold
* to measure
* to weigh

**Others**

* to look (=resemble)
* to seem
* to be *(in most cases)*
* to have *(when it means "to possess")*\*

**Exceptions**

Perception verbs (see, hear, feel, taste, smell) are often used with *can: I can see...* These verbs may be used in the continuous form but with a different meaning

* *This coat****feels****nice and warm.* (your perception of the coat's qualities)
* ***John's feeling****much better now* (his health is improving)
* *She****has****three dogs and a cat.* (possession)
* ***She's having****supper.* (She's eating)
* *I can****see****Anthony in the garden* (perception)
* ***I'm seeing****Anthony later* (We are planning to meet)

|  |
| --- |
| ***Wh Questions*** |
| *Why****am****I eat****ing****chocolate ?* |
| *What****are****you study****ing****now ?* |
| *When****is****he work****ing****?* |
| *What****is****she do****ing****?* |
| *Why****is****it rain****ing****?* |
| *Who****are****we meet****ing****?* |
| *How****are****they travell****ing****?* |

* ***Where is****he go****ing****?*
* ***Where's****she travel****ing****to?*
* ***How are****gett****ing****to the store?*
* ***Why are****the buses runn****ing****late?*
* ***What is****my dog eat****ing****?*
* ***What's****the policeman say****ing****?*
* ***What are****those kids play****ing****with?*
* ***Where are****my children hid****ing****?*
* ***How's****your new phone work****ing****?*