

Present Simple vs. Present Continuous

Lesson Objective: The students will develop their ability to talk about the present moment. This will be achieved by focusing on the difference between stative verbs and continuous verbs. The former should be used with the *present simple* tense and the latter should be used with the *present continuous* tense.

Skill Level: Pre-intermediate

Preparation Time: About 30 minutes (assuming you have a laser printer and an office-guillotine).

Lesson Duration: 1 hour

Preparation advice

- Print out a copy of the worksheets for each pair / group that you will teach. Print out extra copies of page 4 if you plan to have the students do this part individually.
- Print out a copy of the answers for each student, plus a copy for you to use in class.
 - To save paper, print the answers double sided, two pages per side. It should be possible to change the print settings in *File → Print → Properties*.
- Print out a copy of the structure cards for each group. Cut these out.
- Print out a copy of the game board for each group. If you can, print in colour.
- Print out a copy of the board game cards for each group. Print double sided and in colour if you can.
 - To save time, cut out the cards using an office guillotine if you have one.
 - Keep the “what’s your verb”, “mind the gap” and “question” cards in separate stacks.
- Each board game also requires a dice and some counters. If you don’t have counters, get the students to write their initials on square pieces of paper.

Teaching procedure

Warmer: This is a quick warmer called “One truth, two lies”.

First, write a present simple or present continuous question on the board, for example, “Where do you live?” Next, get a student to ask you the question and give them 3 answers (one answer being true). Allow the students to guess which answer is true (1, 2 or 3).

Write some more questions on the board and allow the students to answer and guess together. Be sure they answer using full sentences. Below are some questions you can use:

- *When is your birthday?*
- *What do you usually eat for breakfast?*
- *Where are you working / studying at the moment?*

Please turn over...

Page 1: Fold this page in half to show only the top half. Use the examples to compare a *present action* with a *present state* (a fact, feeling etc.). Below is a summary.

- To describe an **action happening now**, use *present continuous*. An action can be defined as something that can be seen and/or controlled, such as “run”.
- To describe a **state which is true now**, use *present simple*. A state can be defined as something that cannot be seen or controlled, such as “love”.

Next, have the students unfold the page and answer the concept check questions. Be sure they understand the key concepts above before moving on.

Page 2: Keep the students in pairs / groups and have them decide if each verb is *stative* or *continuous*. Give them about 6 minutes to do this and then provide them with feedback.

Structure: Give each pair / group a set of laminated structure cards. Tell them a specific structure that you would like them to make, e.g. the positive structure of *present continuous*, and allow them to make that structure using the cards.

Have them make the positive, negative and question structures for *present continuous* and *present simple*. This stage should only take about 3 or 4 minutes.

Page 3: This sheet reviews a few special cases where verbs can have a stative or continuous meaning depending on the situation. For each question, the student is given two definitions for a verb (one stative and the other continuous). The student must then read two sentences and decide which has the stative meaning and which has the continuous meaning.

Briefly review the answers once they are done and clarify if needed. This stage should take about 4 minutes

Page 4: This is a simple gap-fill which provides controlled practice. This can be done in pairs or you can make extra copies so the students can do it individually.

The students have to read each sentence and fill the gap using the verb and the correct tense (present simple / present continuous). Note that questions 9 to 14 must be completed using the negative form. This should take about 7 minutes. Provide the student with feedback when they are finished.

Board game: First, show the student the game board and cards and then briefly describe how the game works. It's simple - a student rolls the dice, moves their counter and then takes a card.

The cards should be used as follows:

- **What's your verb** – The student must make a sentence using the picture and the verb.
- **Mind the gap** – The student must complete the sentence using the verb and the correct tense. They must read out their answer NOT write on the card.
- **Question card** – The student must answer the question on the card using the correct tense.

Play the game until it's the end of the lesson. Be sure to monitor the students and provide support if needed.