

Present Tense & its Uses

In English, there are four present tenses: **simple present, present perfect, present continuous, and present perfect continuous**. These four tenses have a total of 10 different uses. Here, we'll look at the form and uses of each tense.

Simple Present

Form: Use the base form of a verb, adding a /s/ to the end of the verb if the subject is singular. (Unless the verb is irregular, [in which case other rules may apply.](#))

Uses:

- *Use 1: Actions that are habitual or routine*
EXAMPLES: The sun rises. I brush my teeth twice a day.
- *Use 2: General, timeless facts*
EXAMPLES: Spiders make webs. Babies drink milk.
- *Use 3: Narrative style (used when recalling past events or announcing things that are happening in the moment)*
EXAMPLES: So I go to the store yesterday, and the clerk says "We're closed!" He hits the baseball out of the field and makes a home run!
- *Use 4: The "real" present (things that are happening right now), but ONLY when the verb is stative. Stative verbs* deal with the way the subject is, instead of what the subject does.*
EXAMPLES: That car looks old. They think that's a bad idea.

Present Perfect

Form: Have or has + past form of a verb



Uses:

- *Use 1: Actions that started in the past, continue into the present, and may continue into the future*
EXAMPLES: The children **have felt** sick ever since they ate lunch. My neighbor **has lived** next door to me for two years.
- *Use 2: Separate actions that happened in the past and may happen again in the future*
EXAMPLES: That man **has traveled** overseas several times. We **have eaten** at that restaurant once or twice.
- *Use 3: Recently completed actions that still influence things happening in the present*
EXAMPLES: The sun **has risen** and you need to wake up. They **have finished** their meeting, so now they can go.

Present Continuous

Form: The present tense of “to be” (am/is/are) + verb + ing

Uses:

- *Use 1: The “real” present (things that are happening right now), for all verbs except stative verbs*
EXAMPLES: I **am sitting** down right now. He can’t come to the phone because he **is working**. You can’t see the children because they **are hiding**.
- *Use 2: Temporary actions that may not be happening right now, but have not yet been completed*
EXAMPLES: I **am taking** an English course. The truck **is being repaired**. Plans **are being made**.

Present Perfect Continuous

Form: Have or has + been + verb + ing



Uses:

- Use 1: Actions that started in the past, continue into the present, and may continue into the future (note that this is the exact same use and meaning as Use 1 of present perfect)

EXAMPLES: The children **have been feeling** sick ever since they ate lunch. My neighbour **has been living** next door to me for two years.

