

Time , Tense & Aspect
The PRESENT TENSE

Chapter 3
LECTURE 3 PART 1

TENSE

English has two tenses: **PRESENT TENSE** and **PAST TENSE**

- **THE PRESENT TENSE:**

- 1. TIMELESS present (-s form)
- 2. LIMITED present (v-ing form)
- 3. Instantaneous present (-s form & v-ing form)

- **THE PRESENT TENSE:**
- **1. TIMELESS present (-s form)**

Simple present form TIMELESS PRESENT

* Time with Simple present is PERMANENT -UNLIMITED

is used to express :

1.Habitual action

*the action is a habit (or another type of repeated action like routines) in the present.

EX:

*I usually eat lunch at the school cafeteria.

I (always) write with a special pen.

I take a shower every morning.

I get up early.

My watch keeps good time.

I work at sports shop. (It is my permanent job not temporary)
They live in a very nice flat. (They still living there- permanently)

2) Universal statements

- Time with Simple present is PERMANENT –UNLIMITED

Present simple tense is used to express general truths/facts. The action is always or usually true.

Ex: (Truth/Fact)

Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases.

The sun rises from east.

Deserts receives very little rainfall.

**Present Progressive
Or
LIMITED PRESENT**

2.LIMITED PRESENT
Expressed with the Present Progressive

The Present progressive

the action is viewed as a process/an ongoing activity of limited & temporal time.
duration

*Usually, present progressive tense means

- 1) the action is happening right now .
- 2) the action is unfinished and still continuing.

(Incompleteness+of Limited Duration)

1. The Activity/process which is happening right now-at the moment of speaking.

We have an Incomplete Activity:

There is an ongoing/continuous activity at the time of speaking + it is not finished yet & it has a limited duration.

Ex

-A: What are you doing(now)? B: I am teaching the present simple tense.

(The activity is happening right now + it is not finished+has a limited duration)

-You're reading a booklet about verb tenses.

(This action is happening right now+incomplete+ for limited duration.)

John isn't in class. He's taking care of his son, who's sick today.

(This action(taking care) is happening right now+not finished+limited duration(today))

**2) the action is in process(incomplete) & of a limited duration
BUT it is not happening at the time of speaking(right now)**

Peter is in the library. He is reading a letter.

reading the letter has duration; started before the moment of speaking and continues after it. That duration is limited; some (unspecified) time ago we know that he was not reading, and at some (also unspecified) time in the future, when he reaches the end of the letter, he will stop.

This is my friend Joe. He is writing a book titled *Who Moved My Chicken Soup from Venus?* (The action of writing is unfinished and still continuing, so I use present progressive even if Joe is not writing right now.)

TEMPORAL (Limited)SITUATIONS:

to talk about temporary situations.

- The present progressive is used for situations that we see as *temporary or has limited duration* (around the present moment) that lasts for short time.

EX:

I am walking to work this week

In, the limited duration of the activity is evident from the adverbial this week. Unless uttered by the speaker when s/he is in route to work, then the action is not taking place at the moment of speaking. Even if uttered then, the focus is on the limited duration, i.e. only in the course of one week, that the walking method of getting to work is happening.

Normally he lives in London but at present, he is living in Boston. (Living for an extended period in the present—it will not be continued for a long period)

I am working at a sports shop for six weeks. (six weeks is limited duration)

Habitual Actions: Repeated short action

Present progressive can show a temporary habit in the present

EX:

It's Ramadan, so Noor and Ahmed are fasting every day from sunrise to sunset. (Present progressive shows that the habit is temporary. It suggests that Noor and Ahmed will stop fasting when Ramadan ends.)

Usually I drive to school, but this semester I take I'm taking the Bay Area Rapid Transit. (Present progressive shows that the habit is temporary. I'll probably start driving again sometime in the future.)

Habitual Actions: Adverbs of high frequency:

The present progressive is used to talk about Repetition and Irritation of habits like routines with "Always"==
this is when we're complaining about someone's habit that we find annoying.

 Annoying habit (often used with always):
 to express a negative reaction or situation
 or to complain as in:

He is always writing with a special pen-just because he likes to be different.

He is always asking silly questions. I wish he would stop.

Andrea is always losing her keys.

***We can also use keep + verb-ing for this type of complaint.**

Simple present can be used with the same meaning, but then it sounds more like **a statement of fact** rather a **complaint**.

Norton's driving me crazy! He's **always leaving** his dirty socks on the living room floor!

Norton's driving me crazy! He **always leaves** his dirty socks on the living room floor!

Norton's driving me crazy! He **keeps leaving** his dirty socks on the living room floor!

3. INSTANTANEOUS PRESENT

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commentary on events or actions

In this type of present we can use either the present simple form or the present progressive form.

Expressed with either the simple (especially in a series of actions, more than one action immediately happens after the other) or the progressive form

EX:

- "Watch him **now** (at the time of speaking): he **holds** [**is holding**] down the control key at the same time that he **presses** [**is pressing**] the letter *d*." (holds or holding)

- Watch careful **now**: first I write with my ordinary pen; **now**, I write with a special pen.

- As you see (**now**), I **drop** / am dropping the stone into the water.