

A2 TEENS · GRAMMAR · LESSON 04

# Screen Time: Present Simple vs Present Continuous

"I **check** my phone every five minutes." "Right now I **'m watching** a video instead of doing homework." How do you talk about your tech habits versus what you're doing this second? That's the difference between the Present Simple and the Present Continuous.

■ 45 min · ✓ CEFR A2 · ■ Present Simple vs Continuous · ■ Technology & Social Media

## WARM-UP

### 01 What's on your screen right now?

Think about your phone and your apps...

Answer in full sentences. Don't think too much — just talk!

- 01 How many hours a day do you spend on your phone? What do you usually do on it?
- 02 What app are you using the most this week? Why?
- 03 Do your parents ever say you spend too much time on screens? What do they say?
- 04 What are you watching or playing right now (this week)?

## GRAMMAR FOCUS

### 02 Present Simple vs Present Continuous

#### Two tenses, two meanings

The **Present Simple** is for habits, routines, and things that are always true. The **Present Continuous** is for actions happening **right now** or **around now**.

PRESENT SIMPLE	PRESENT CONTINUOUS
<b>Habits &amp; routines</b>	<b>Right now / around now</b>
I check my phone every morning.	I'm checking my phone right now.
She watches YouTube after school.	She is watching a video at the moment.
They don't use TikTok.	They aren't using their phones today.
He plays games every day.	He is playing a new game this week.

#### How to form them

##### Present Simple: subject + base form (+ s/es for he/she/it)

For **he, she, it**, add **-s** or **-es**. For **I, you, we, they**, use the base form.

I play · you play · he plays · she watches · it costs

Negative: don't / doesn't + base → I don't like ads. He doesn't post selfies.

Question: Do / Does + subject + base? → Do you follow any influencers? Does she stream on Twitch?

### Present Continuous: subject + am/is/are + verb-ing

Use **am** (I), **is** (he/she/it), or **are** (you/we/they) + the **-ing** form.

I'm scrolling · you're texting · he's streaming · we're downloading

Negative: am not / isn't / aren't + -ing → I'm not watching TV. She isn't posting anything.

Question: Am / Is / Are + subject + -ing? → Are you listening to a podcast? Is he gaming again?

### Spelling rules for -ing

Most verbs just add **-ing**, but watch out for three small rules:

RULE 1 — JUST ADD -ING	RULE 2 — DROP THE "E"	RULE 3 — DOUBLE THE CONSONANT
<b>play → playing</b>	<b>use → using</b>	<b>chat → chatting</b>
play → playing watch → watching check → checking post → posting	use → using like → liking share → sharing take → taking	chat → chatting get → getting run → running sit → sitting

### Signal words

★ **Present Simple signals** (habit/routine): every day · always · usually · often · sometimes · never · on weekdays · once a week · after school · in the morning

★ **Present Continuous signals** (now/around now): right now · at the moment · today · this week · this month · currently · look! · listen!

### Common mistakes

✗ I **am check** my phone every day. → ✓ I **check** my phone every day. (*habit = Present Simple*)

✗ She **watches** a video right now. → ✓ She **is watching** a video right now. (*now = Present Continuous*)

✗ He **is liking** horror films. → ✓ He **likes** horror films. (*like, love, hate, want, know, need = state verbs → always Present Simple*)

## KEY VOCABULARY

## 03 Words for technology and social media

WORD	MEANING	EXAMPLE
<b>screen time</b> NOUN	the amount of time you spend looking at a phone, tablet or computer	<i>I spent six hours yesterday!</i>
<b>scroll</b> VERB	to move up or down on a page with your finger	<i>I scroll through Instagram for ages before I sleep.</i>
<b>post</b> VERB / NOUN	to share something online / the thing you share	<i>She posts photos of her cat every day.</i>
<b>stream</b> VERB	to watch or broadcast video live on the internet	<i>He streams himself playing Minecraft on Twitch.</i>
<b>follower</b> NOUN	someone who subscribes to your social media	<i>She has 2,000 followers on Instagram.</i>
<b>notification</b> NOUN	a message or alert from an app	<i>I get too many notifications from group chats.</i>
<b>download</b> VERB	to save a file or app from the internet to your device	<i>I downloaded a new game last night.</i>
<b>addicted</b> ADJECTIVE	unable to stop doing something even if it's bad for you	<i>I'm addicted to short videos.</i>
<b>influencer</b> NOUN	a person who is popular on social media and affects what other people buy or think	<i>My favourite influencer just posted a new video.</i>
<b>offline</b> ADJ / ADV	not connected to the internet / in real life	<i>Sometimes I go offline for the whole weekend.</i>

## READING

## 04 Four teens, four screen-time stories

DIGITAL LIVES · ISSUE 04

How Much Is *Too Much*?

*Four teens talk about their screens, their habits, and what they're doing about it*

We asked four teenagers: "How much time do you spend on your phone, and what are you doing on it right now?" Their answers show the difference between what we always do (Present Simple) and what we're doing these days (Present Continuous).

**MIA, 15, GERMANY** *Screen time: 5 hrs/day*

"I **check** my phone first thing every morning — it's a bad habit, I **know**. I **usually scroll** through TikTok for about thirty minutes before school. Right now, I'm **trying** a new rule: no phone before breakfast. It **isn't** easy! This week I'm **also reading** a book instead of watching videos before bed. My mum **says** I **look** more relaxed already."

**LEO, 16, BRAZIL** *Screen time: 7 hrs/day*

"I **love** gaming — I **play** online games every evening with my friends. We **usually start** at 8 p.m. and sometimes we **don't stop** until midnight. At the moment, I'm **playing** a new survival game, and I'm **completely addicted**. My dad always **tells** me to go to bed, but I **don't listen**. I **know** it's a problem, but I'm **not doing** anything about it yet."

**AISHA, 14, TURKEY** *Screen time: 3 hrs/day*

"I **don't use** social media much. I **prefer** messaging apps — I **chat** with my friends on WhatsApp **every day**. I **never post** photos of myself online. Right now, I'm **learning** to edit videos for a school project. I'm **using** a free app, and I'm **really enjoying** it. Maybe I'll become a film-maker one day!"

**JAKE, 13, CANADA** *Screen time: 4 hrs/day*

"I **watch** YouTube **every day** after school. I **follow** about twenty channels — mostly science and gaming. I **sometimes share** videos with my friends. This month, I'm **doing** a 'digital detox' challenge: no phone on Sundays. It's hard! Last Sunday I **didn't know** what to do. But I actually **went** outside and **played** basketball. My sister **says I'm being** weird, but I **think** it's good for me."

**The lesson:** Habits use the **Present Simple** (check, watch, play, follow, use). Things happening now or this week use the **Present Continuous** ('m trying, 'm playing, 'm learning, 'm doing). Signal words like "every day", "usually", "always" point to Present Simple. "Right now", "at the moment", "this week", "this month" point to Present Continuous.

**PRACTICE****05 Present Simple or Present Continuous?**

★ Each question shows a verb. Choose the correct form. The hint tag tells you what kind: **PRESENT SIMPLE / PRESENT CONTINUOUS / NEGATIVE / QUESTION.**

- 1 She \_\_\_\_\_ YouTube every day after school. (watch) **PRESENT SIMPLE**  
 watches  is watching  watch
- 2 Look! He \_\_\_\_\_ live on Twitch right now. (stream) **PRESENT CONTINUOUS**  
 streams  is streaming  is streams
- 3 I \_\_\_\_\_ TikTok. I prefer Instagram. (not use) **NEGATIVE**  
 am not using  don't use  doesn't use
- 4 This week, we \_\_\_\_\_ a digital detox challenge. (do) **PRESENT CONTINUOUS**  
 do  are doing  does
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ video games every evening? (he / play) **QUESTION**  
 Is he playing  Does he play  Does he plays
- 6 She \_\_\_\_\_ anything on Instagram today. (not post) **NEGATIVE**  
 doesn't post  isn't posting  not posting
- 7 I \_\_\_\_\_ watching cooking videos. (love) **PRESENT SIMPLE**  
 am loving  love  loves
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_ with your friends right now? (you / chat) **QUESTION**  
 Do you chat  Are you chatting  Are you chat

**SPEAKING****06 What's your digital life like?**

*Interview your partner about their screen habits*

Ask and answer these questions. Use the Present Simple for habits and the Present Continuous for things happening now or this week. Then swap!

- What apps do you use every day? Which one is your favourite?
- Are you playing any games at the moment? Tell me about them.
- Do you follow any influencers? Who? Why do you like them?
- What are you watching on YouTube or Netflix this week?
- Do you think you spend too much time on your phone? What are you doing about it?

**EXAMPLE CONVERSATION**

**A:** What apps do you use every day?

**B:** I use WhatsApp, YouTube, and Instagram. My favourite is YouTube — I watch it every evening.

**A:** Are you watching anything good this week?

**B:** Yes! I'm watching a series about space. It's amazing.

**A:** Do you think you spend too much time on your phone?

**B:** Hmm, maybe. I usually spend about four hours a day. Right now I'm trying to use it less before bed.



## QUIZ

**08 Check your understanding**

Circle the correct answer. Check your answers at the end.

**1. Which tense do we use for habits and routines?**

- A. Present Continuous
- B. Present Simple
- C. Past Simple
- D. Future Simple

**2. Complete: 'Right now, she \_\_\_\_\_ a video on TikTok.' (watch)**

- A. watches
- B. is watching
- C. watch
- D. watching

**3. Which sentence is CORRECT?**

- A. I am check my phone every day.
- B. I check my phone every day.
- C. I checking my phone every day.
- D. I checks my phone every day.

**4. Choose the CORRECT negative:**

- A. She don't like social media.
- B. She doesn't likes social media.
- C. She doesn't like social media.
- D. She isn't like social media.

**5. Which word is a signal for Present Continuous?**

- A. always
- B. every day
- C. at the moment
- D. usually

**6. Why is 'He is liking horror films' WRONG?**

- A. Because 'he' needs 'are'.
- B. Because 'like' is a state verb — we don't use it in the continuous.
- C. Because it should be 'likeing'.
- D. Because we need 'does' here.

**7. Complete the -ing form: 'chat → \_\_\_\_\_'**

- A. chating
- B. chatting
- C. chateing
- D. chatteing

**8. From the reading: What is Jake doing this month?**

- A. He is learning video editing.
- B. He is playing a new survival game.
- C. He is doing a digital detox challenge.
- D. He is streaming on Twitch.

**ANSWER KEY****Fill in the blanks:**

1. watches · 2. is streaming · 3. don't use · 4. are doing  
5. Does he play · 6. isn't posting · 7. love · 8. Are you chatting

**Quiz:**

1. B · 2. B · 3. B · 4. C · 5. C · 6. B · 7. B · 8. C

**Great work!** Next lesson: *Game On! — Sports, Free Time & the Imperative*