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The present tense

The scene director





Grammar at a glance

When you want to...	Form to use	Worked example
Describe a routine	I walk / she walks	Noor walks home most days.
Show a live action	am, is or are + -ing	Today Noor is walking to the bus stop.
Ask or negate	does + base / is + -ing	Does she walk? Is she walking now?
Describe a state	know / need / own	She knows the route already.

SELECT A ROW TO OPEN ITS LESSON

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THE PRESENT TENSE

Choose the meaning before the verb



Lily has one photograph and a week of garden notes. A photograph captures a moment; the notes show a routine.

Use the present simple for a routine. Use am, is or are with an -ing form to show an action in progress.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Read the weekly plan	Lily waters the plant every morning.	This describes her routine. It does not tell us whether she is watering at this exact moment.
Watch the live camera	Lily is watering the plant now.	This describes an action in progress at the moment we are watching.
Another example	Noor walks home most days.	Describe a routine. Pattern: I walk / she walks.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

They grow herbs every year. They are planting mint at this moment.

Does a routine have to be happening at this instant?

No. “Lily waters every morning” can remain true while she reads at lunchtime. The present simple covers the pattern, not continuous activity.

YOUR TURN

A daily habit: “The gardener ___ the gate every evening.”
is locking / locks

> **Answer • locks**
> A repeated daily habit takes the present simple.

THE PRESENT TENSE

Build a complete live caption

The camera crew sends rushed captions. Some are missing a helper; others use the wrong ending. Repair them so the film makes sense.

Build a live description with a subject, am/is/are and the -ing form. “We are filming” has all three parts.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Sam speaks	I am watering the plants.	I takes am. Keep the -ing form for the action in progress.
Describe Sam	He is watering the plants.	He takes is. The action word remains watering.
Describe both gardeners	They are watering the plants.	They takes are. Both parts, are and watering, are needed.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

Plural subject	Finite helper	Action in progress
The helpers	are	running.

Can any verb double its last consonant before ing?

No. Short stressed patterns such as run to running differ from open to opening. Learn the pattern and check unfamiliar verbs rather than doubling every final letter.

YOUR TURN

“We ___ recording the birds now.”

am / is / are

> Answer • are
> We takes are.

THE PRESENT TENSE

Questions and negatives

A watering can is empty. Before filming again, ask what Sam is doing and what he usually does. The two kinds of question need different helpers.

For ordinary present-simple action verbs, use do or does in questions. In a continuous question, move am, is or are before the subject.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Ask about a routine	Does Sam water the plants every morning?	Use does before Sam and the base action word water to ask about a routine.
Ask about this moment	Is Sam watering the plants now?	Move is before Sam. Keep watering for the action in progress.
Correct a live caption	Sam is not watering the plants now.	Put not after is to say that this action is not happening now.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

Routine question
Does she water daily?

Live question
Is she watering now?

Can does and is be swapped without changing meaning?

No. “Does she water?” and “Is she watering?” use different structures and usually ask about different time meanings.

YOUR TURN

“___ they clean the tools after every session?”
Are / Do

> Answer • Do
> A routine question uses do with the base verb clean.

THE PRESENT TENSE

Meaning matters more than clue words

The final voice-over includes actions, habits and what the team knows. A camera can show someone watering; it cannot photograph their knowledge.

Choose the form that fits the meaning. A state such as knowing an answer normally takes the simple form, even with now.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
A regular action	Lily waters the plant every morning.	A repeated action uses the present simple.
An action in progress	Lily is watering the plant now.	An action happening now uses the present continuous.
A state, even now	Sam knows the plan now.	Know describes a state of knowledge. In this meaning, use knows even with now.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

State or opinion
I think the plan is good.

Active process
I am thinking about the plan.

Does now always mean use an ing verb?

No. “I know now” and “I want water now” use state meanings. Start with what the speaker means.

YOUR TURN

Describe knowledge: “They ___ the answer now.”
know / are knowing

> **Answer • know**
> Know describes a state, even with now.

VERB FORM REFERENCE / 1 OF 2

Simple and continuous

Follow one writer through three time frames. Read across each row to see how a statement becomes a negative or a question.

FORM AND USE	STATEMENT	NEGATIVE	QUESTION
base verb; he/she/it adds -s • A regular activity			
Present simple	Noor writes every day.	Noor does not write every day.	Does Noor write every day?
am/is/are + -ing • An activity in progress now			
Present continuous	Noor is writing now.	Noor is not writing now.	Is Noor writing now?
past form; did + base in questions • A completed event at a finished time			
Past simple	Noor wrote yesterday.	Noor did not write yesterday.	Did Noor write yesterday?
was/were + -ing • An activity in progress at a past point			
Past continuous	Noor was writing at noon.	Noor was not writing at noon.	Was Noor writing at noon?
will + base verb • An expectation about a later event			
Future with will	Noor will write tomorrow.	Noor will not write tomorrow.	Will Noor write tomorrow?
will be + -ing • An activity in progress at a future point			
Future continuous	Noor will be writing at noon.	Noor will not be writing at noon.	Will Noor be writing at noon?

BUILD THE VERB GROUP

Simple statements use write, writes or wrote. In negatives and questions, do, does or did takes the tense and write stays in its base form. Continuous forms use be + writing.

VERB FORM REFERENCE / 2 OF 2

Perfect and perfect continuous

A perfect form looks back from a reference point. Compare a completed result with time spent on an activity.

FORM AND USE	STATEMENT	NEGATIVE	QUESTION
have/has + past participle • A result connected to now			
Present perfect	Noor has written the note.	Noor has not written the note.	Has Noor written the note?
have/has been + -ing • Activity over a period up to now			
Present perfect continuous	Noor has been writing since ten.	Noor has not been writing since ten.	Has Noor been writing since ten?
had + past participle • Completion before a past reference point			
Past perfect	Noor had written it by noon.	Noor had not written it by noon.	Had Noor written it by noon?
had been + -ing • Ongoing activity up to a past point			
Past perfect continuous	By noon, Noor had been writing for an hour.	By noon, Noor had not been writing for an hour.	Had Noor been writing for an hour by noon?
will have + past participle • Completion by a future reference point			
Future perfect	Noor will have written it by Friday.	Noor will not have written it by Friday.	Will Noor have written it by Friday?
will have been + -ing • Duration measured at a future point			
Future perfect continuous	By noon, Noor will have been writing for an hour.	By noon, Noor will not have been writing for an hour.	Will Noor have been writing for an hour by noon?

BUILD THE VERB GROUP

Perfect = have + written. Perfect continuous = have + been + writing. Change the first helper for the time frame. Put not after that helper to negate, or move it before the subject to ask.

ONE LAST CHALLENGE

A routine or a live report?

Ravi usually rides to school. Today you can see him walking. Write a caption for each situation.



A POSSIBLE ANSWER

Ravi rides to school most days. Today he is walking.

Rides gives the routine. Is walking shows the action in progress.

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