



Remember to watch the video on our website first!

Then read the conversation between Sophie and Hadiyah, a university student she met on her trip to Egypt. Hadiyah is studying English and Sophie is explaining some grammar.



**Grammar
Snacks**

We use the present continuous (*am/is/are + -ing*) to talk about temporary things which have begun but haven't finished. They are often happening now, at this moment.

Here are some examples of things happening now.

*I'm just **uploading** some photos to Facebook and I'm **sending** a message to Billie.*

*We're all **riding** camels and the sun's **shining**.*

*They're **waiting** for me to get off the phone!*



Sophie



Hadiyah

I'm not sure what 'temporary' means. Can I say 'I'm learning to drive', even if I'm not having a driving lesson right now?

Yes, absolutely! You might not be having a driving lesson right at this moment, but it is temporary, so that's correct. We use the present continuous for longer situations like this too.



OK, I see what you mean. So that's for things happening now, or round about now. What about the future? Can I use the present continuous for the future?

Yes, I'm glad you asked me that. We use the present continuous for future arrangements with other people.

*At eight I'm **meeting** Lucas, just for a quick coffee.*



What about questions and negatives?

For questions you just change the *subject* and the verb *to be*. So, *You are > Are you*, then add the *-ing* form. Sometimes you need a question word first.

***Are you working** hard for the exam?*

***What are you doing**?*

***Is anybody sitting** here?*



For negatives you add *not* after the verb *to be*. Don't forget to use a contraction if you're speaking.

*You're **not** really **studying** at all, are you? (or You **aren't** really studying...)*
*They **aren't using** the computer room at the moment.*
*This program **isn't working**.*



That's fine, but I suppose there are some spelling rules for *-ing* forms?

Yes, you're right. If a verb ends in *e*, you take off the *e* and add *-ing*.

have - having *ride - riding*

If a verb ends in a vowel + a consonant, the *consonant* is usually *doubled* before you add *-ing*.

swim - swimming *run - running*

But be careful with verbs *with more than two syllables* where the stress *isn't* on the last syllable. With those you *don't* double the consonant.

visit - visiting *open - opening*



OK, but what about two-syllable verbs where the stress *is* on the last syllable, like *begin*?

If the stress *is* on the last syllable, you *do* double the final consonant.

begin - beginning



Right, the present continuous seems quite easy to me. *I'm understanding it perfectly!*

Whoops! Sorry, you can't say *'I'm understanding it*.



Why not? I'm talking about something happening right now.

Yes, but there is a group of verbs which are called *state verbs* which we use for states (not actions) and we *don't* usually use these in the continuous form.



want - need - like - love - hate - prefer - believe - think - know - realise -
understand - recognise - suppose - be - exist - appear - look - seem - belong
- have (for possession) - own - feel - smell - taste



So these are verbs for talking about emotions, thinking, existing, appearing, possession and the senses.

Yes, excellent.



But wait a minute. What about, 'I'm thinking of coming with you tomorrow.' Or, 'I'm thinking about my boyfriend.'

Yes, they are correct. But the meaning of think there is 'having thoughts in your mind' or 'considering'. It's not the same as 'having an opinion' about something.

*I **think** that song's brilliant. (opinion)*

*She's **thinking** about studying archaeology. (considering / wondering about)*



OK, so there are some exceptions. Like, 'I'm loving it.'

No, sorry, that's not an exception, that's wrong!



It *can't* be wrong!

Well, OK, maybe it's a new usage. English does change. But *don't* use it in exams!



Watch the video on our website!

