

41 Present simple or present continuous?

1 Use

PRESENT SIMPLE

to talk about things we do regularly:

Carla dances for the Euro Ballet Company every evening.



with time expressions:
usually, often, every day, once a month

PRESENT CONTINUOUS

to talk about things that are happening at the time we are speaking:

Right now, Carla's dancing in Swan Lake.



with time expressions:
right now, at the moment

PRESENT SIMPLE

to talk about permanent situations:

I work for the Euro Ballet Company in London.



no time expressions

PRESENT CONTINUOUS

to talk about temporary situations:

This summer I'm working in Australia.



with time expressions:
today, this week, at the moment

2 Verbs that don't use the continuous form

! We don't normally use the continuous with these verbs:

- feeling verbs (*like, love, hate, prefer, need, want*):
 X *I am liking music.*
 ✓ *I like music.*
- thinking verbs (*agree, believe, forget, know, mean, remember, think, understand*):
 X *My brother is agreeing with me.*
 ✓ *My brother agrees with me.*
- sense verbs (*hear, see, smell, taste*):
 X *That coffee is smelling delicious!*
 ✓ *That coffee smells delicious!*
- the verbs *be, belong, contain, cost, own*:
 X *That bag isn't belonging to me.*
 ✓ *That bag doesn't belong to me.*

The verb *think* has a different meaning in the present simple and the present continuous:
What do you think of the show? (= What is your opinion?)
What are you thinking about? (= Tell me your thoughts now.)