

28 Present continuous



Trudi's a student. She's **studying** animal behaviour. More people **are taking** their pets to the vet with behaviour problems these days, so Trudi should find a job when she graduates.

1 Form

POSITIVE	<i>I'm having lunch. He's watching TV. They're running away.</i>
NEGATIVE	<i>I'm not watching TV. She isn't having lunch. We aren't staying there.</i>
QUESTIONS	<i>Are you watching TV? (No, I'm not.) Is she running away? (Yes, she is.) What are they having for lunch?</i>

Some verbs change their spelling in the *-ing* form, e.g. *run* → *running*.

Spelling rules for *-ing* forms ➤ page 350

2 Actions happening now or around now

We use the present continuous for

- actions happening while we are speaking: *Hurry up. The taxi's waiting.*
'Are you **watching** TV?' 'No. I'm **doing** my homework.'
- actions happening around the time of speaking: *Trudi's **studying** animal behaviour.*
- temporary situations:

*We're **staying** at my mother's while the builders **are repairing** the roof of our house.*

With these uses of the present continuous, we often use time expressions like *now*, *at the moment*, *today*, *this week*, etc: *I can't talk for long because I'm cooking **at the moment**.*

*Joe isn't working at home **this week** – he's at a conference in Germany.*

We sometimes use the present continuous with *always* to criticise another person's actions. In speech we **stress** *always* strongly in this type of sentence:

*Yolanda's **always calling** me late at night. I'm getting really fed up with it.*

*'I've lost my keys. Can you come home and let me in?' 'You're **always losing** your keys!'*

3 Changes and trends

We use the present continuous to talk about things that are changing as we speak:

*Harry's been really ill but he's **getting better** now. Prices **are going up** again.*

*More people **are taking** their pets to the vet with behaviour problems these days.*

4 Describing pictures

We use the present continuous to describe what is happening in pictures and photos:

*In the photo on page 81, the scientists **are tasting** food. The woman in the middle **is holding** a cup...*

Present continuous to talk about the future ➤ Unit 41.2