

# 19

## Present tenses (I am doing / I do) for the future

### A Present continuous (I am doing) with a future meaning



This is Ben's diary for next week.

He **is playing** tennis on Monday afternoon.  
 He **is going** to the dentist on Tuesday morning.  
 He **is having** dinner with Kate on Friday.

In all these examples, Ben has already decided and arranged to do these things.

'I'm doing' something (tomorrow) = I have already decided and arranged to do it:

- A: What **are you doing** on Saturday evening? (*not* What do you do)
- B: I'm **going** to the theatre. (*not* I go)
- A: What time is Katherine arriving tomorrow?
- B: Half past ten. I'm **meeting** her at the station.
- I'm **not working** tomorrow, so we can go out somewhere.
- Steve **isn't playing** football next Saturday. He's hurt his leg.

'I'm going to (do)' is also possible in these sentences:

- What **are you going to do** on Saturday evening?

But the present continuous is more natural when we talk about arrangements. See **Unit 20B**.

Do not use **will** to talk about what you have arranged to do:

- What **are you doing** this evening? (*not* What will you do)
- Alex **is getting** married next month. (*not* will get)

You can also use the present continuous for an action *just before you begin to do it*. This happens especially with verbs of movement (**go/come/leave** etc.):

- I'm tired. I'm **going** to bed now. Goodnight. (*not* I go to bed now)
- 'Jess, are you ready yet?' 'Yes, I'm **coming**.' (*not* I come)

### B Present simple (I do) with a future meaning

We use the present simple when we talk about timetables, programmes etc. (for public transport, cinemas etc.):

- My train **leaves** at 11.30, so I need to be at the station by 11.15.
- What time **does** the film **start** this evening?
- It's Wednesday tomorrow. / Tomorrow **is** Wednesday.

You can use the present simple to talk about people if their plans are fixed like a timetable:

- I **start** my new job on Monday.
- What time **do** you **finish** work tomorrow?

But the continuous is more usual for personal arrangements:

- What time **are you meeting** Ann tomorrow? (*not* do you meet)

Compare:

#### Present continuous

- What time **are you arriving**?
- I'm **going** to the cinema this evening.

#### Present simple

- What time **does the train arrive**?
- The film starts** at 8.15 (this evening).

# Exercises

**19.1** A friend of yours is planning to go on holiday soon. You ask her about her plans. Use the words in brackets to make your questions.

- 1 (where / go?) Where are you going?
- 2 (how long / go for?) .....
- 3 (when / leave?) .....
- 4 (go / alone?) .....
- 5 (travel / by car?) .....
- 6 (where / stay?) .....

Scotland.  
Ten days.  
Next Friday.  
No, with a friend.  
No, by train.  
In a hotel.



**19.2** Tom wants you to visit him, but you are very busy. Look at your diary for the next few days and explain to him why you can't come.



- TOM: Can you come on Monday evening?  
YOU: Sorry, but I'm playing volleyball ..... (1)  
TOM: What about Tuesday evening then?  
YOU: No, not Tuesday. I ..... (2)  
TOM: And Wednesday evening?  
YOU: ..... (3)  
TOM: Well, are you free on Thursday?  
YOU: I'm afraid not. .... (4)

**19.3** Have you arranged to do anything at these times? Write sentences about yourself.

- 1 (this evening) I'm going out this evening or I'm not doing anything this evening .....
- 2 (tomorrow morning) I .....
- 3 (tomorrow evening) .....
- 4 (next Sunday) .....
- 5 (choose another day or time) .....

**19.4** Put the verb into the more suitable form, present continuous or present simple.

- 1 I'm going (I / go) to the cinema this evening.
- 2 Does the film start (the film / start) at 3.30 or 4.30?
- 3 ..... (we / have) a party next Saturday. Would you like to come?
- 4 The art exhibition ..... (finish) on 3 May.
- 5 ..... (I / not / go) out this evening. ....  
(I / stay) at home.
- 6 '..... (you / do) anything tomorrow morning?' 'No, I'm free. Why?'
- 7 ..... (we / go) to a concert tonight. ....  
(it / start) at 7.30.
- 8 ..... (I / leave) now. I've come to say goodbye.
- 9 A: Have you seen Liz recently?  
B: No, but ..... (we / meet) for lunch next week.
- 10 You are on the train to London and you ask another passenger:  
Excuse me. What time ..... (this train / get) to London?
- 11 You are talking to Helen:  
Helen, ..... (I / go) to the supermarket. .... (you / come) with me?
- 12 You and a friend are watching television. You say:  
I'm bored with this programme. What time ..... (it / end)?
- 13 ..... (I / not / use) the car this evening, so you can have it.
- 14 Sue ..... (come) to see us tomorrow. ....  
(she / travel) by train and her train ..... (arrive) at 10.15.