

A stylized orange speech bubble with a pointed bottom. The word "HELLO" is written in white, bold, uppercase letters across the center of the bubble. The bubble has a soft, rounded top and a pointed bottom, resembling a speech bubble or a thought bubble.

HELLO



argue



concentrate



Grin

1

Present simple and present continuous

Why is the girl in the photo smiling?



A bowler **smiles** at her friends after a good shot.

Why is the girl in the photo **smiling**? It **sounds** like an easy question: she's **having** a good time with friends and she's **feeling** good after a good shot. But psychologists **are** forever **arguing** about this question.

Some **believe** that smiling **is** an individual act: we **smile** because we **feel** happy ... unless we're **trying** to hide our emotions. Others **claim** that we **smile** to build social relationships. Some animals **use** a **grin** to show that they **don't want** to fight, for example, so perhaps our smile **serves** the same function.

So who's right? In one study, researchers filmed people bowling. If you **watch** people doing a very social activity like this, it **looks** as if they're **always smiling**. They **stop** smiling only when they **are concentrating** on their next shot. But when **do** they **start** smiling again? After each good shot, the researchers took photographs to identify when the smile **starts** – while the player **is** still **looking** down the alley or a few seconds later when they **turn** round to share their happiness with the group?

And the results? Only around 4% of bowlers **smile** with their backs to their friends. Far more – 42% – **smile** as soon as they **turn** round. The conclusion: we usually **smile** not because we're happy, but because we're friendly.



- 1 What are the two theories of smiling?
- 2 Why did the researchers choose a bowling alley?

Answers: 1 We smile because we feel happy; we smile to build social relationships. 2 Because bowling is a very social activity.

Present simple and present continuous

Present simple

- 1 Use the present simple to refer to facts and specific routines or habits, and with adverbs of frequency.

We smile because we feel happy.

We usually smile because we're friendly.

- 2 We usually use the present simple with state verbs such as *think, feel, believe, know, seem, appear, like, consist, have and belong.*

Some believe that smiling is an individual act.

- 3 We also often use the present simple to describe events shown in a picture, to make them seem more immediate and alive. For the same reason, we usually use the present simple in news headlines and in television or radio commentaries on sports or other ongoing events.

A bowler smiles at her friends.

And Jake heads the ball to Gallant – who kicks ... and it's a goal!

Prince William visits local hospital.

- 4 Use the present simple in the expressions *Here come(s) ...* and *There go(es) ...*.

There goes Mike, looking as cheerful as usual.

NOT *There is going Mike, ...*

TIP

Use the present simple with verbs like *promise, agree, assure* and *demand*, which are used to perform the act they describe.

I promise I won't be late. (I am using these words to make a promise.)

Present continuous

- 5 Use the present continuous to refer to activities, situations and changes happening now / around now.
... *while the player is still looking down the alley ...*

- 6 We can use the present continuous with indefinite adverbs of frequency (e.g. *always, constantly, forever*) to refer to regular behaviour which is typical, habitual and predictable.

Psychologists are forever arguing about this question.

We sometimes use the present continuous in this way to criticise or express disapproval.

Sally's always losing things. She should be more careful.

- 7 When we describe an action or event with the present simple, we can use the present continuous to refer to activities, situations and changes happening around the same time.

If you watch a group of friends bowling, it looks as if they're always smiling.

Present simple or present continuous

TIP

The present simple is much more common than the present continuous, and it is the best form to use if you are not sure.

- 8 We usually use the present simple to refer to situations which we see as permanent, and the present continuous to refer to situations which we see as temporary. Note the difference:

Tom lives in Rome. He works as a lawyer for a big Italian company. (Rome is his permanent base.)

Jane is living in Rome at the moment. She is working as an English teacher. (She is in Rome temporarily, e.g. for one year.)

- 9 When we tell stories or to give instructions, we use the present simple to describe the shorter actions and events and the present continuous to describe the longer situations or background activity.

Gavin and his wife are sitting at home one evening when the telephone rings and their lives change for ever.

First, you fry the onion in a little oil. While the onion's cooking, you chop the vegetables.

- 10 Although we usually use the present simple with state verbs (see 2 above), we can use the present continuous if we are talking about an ongoing present process rather than a fact.

She's feeling good after a good shot.

Some verbs (e.g. *hear, see, think, appear*) can be state verbs or action verbs, but with a different meaning.

What do you think of Jan's new hairstyle?

(= What's your opinion about it?)

I'm thinking of taking a few days off.

(= I'm considering the possibility of doing it.)

TIP

In the present simple, *see* and *hear* have different meanings.

I see him every day. (= I see)

I see what you mean. (= I understand)

I hear you loud and clear. (= I hear)

I hear you're coming to stay. (= I have been told)

- 11 We use the present simple with verbs like *hope* and *look forward to* in formal situations, and we use the present continuous if we want to sound more informal and less direct.

We very much hope you will be able to attend.

We're really hoping you'll be able to come.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

I'm looking forward to hearing from you soon.



Fill in the gaps with the Present Simple or Present Continuous.



The Fishing Trip

Gordon and his three sons, Mark, Joe and Leo _____ (own) a fishing boat. Every day when they _____ (sail), they _____ (take) a boat full of would-be fishermen out to sea. Leo, the youngest, _____ (sell) tickets every afternoon for the next day's trip. The passengers _____ (arrive) now with their hopes. Some _____ (carry) their own equipment and others _____ (rent) it from Gordon.

Usually when everyone _____ (be) aboard, Gordon _____ (stand) at the wheel and _____ (signal) Mark to untie the boat. But today Mark _____ (daydream) and Joe _____ (do) everything.

Today they _____ (fish) in one of the Gordon's favourite spots. Gordon _____ (tell) his favourite fish stories. Some of the passengers _____ (eat) their lunch, while others, who _____ (not feel) well, _____ (try) not to look at the food or smell the bait (приманка). Leo and Joe _____ (help) some of the passengers. Mark also _____ (try) to help. Poor Mark! He always _____ (try) to be useful, but usually _____ (end up) causing some damage. He _____ (trip) over ropes, _____ (fall) over the anchor. Now, while his brothers _____ (help) the passengers, Mark _____ (lean) out of the boat to catch one of the fishermen's stubborn fish with the net. The fish _____ (jump) in all directions. Oh, it _____ (seem) the fish _____ (win). Mark _____ (fall) overboard. He never knows when to give up.

