



Fluency Space

HOW TO USE

**ENGLISH VERB  
TENSES IN BUSINESS**

**200+ DIAGRAMS  
FOR PERFECT PROFESSIONAL ENGLISH**

**ADVANCED SELF-STUDY BOOK**

**DAVID COX**

How to Use English Verb Tenses in Business by David Cox

Published by David Cox  
Fluency Space  
Praha 2 12000 - Vinohrady  
Czech Republic

[fluencyspace.com](http://fluencyspace.com)

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Cover by Saravanan Povaiyan

1st Edition 2022  
ISBN 978-80-11-01126-0

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# Introduction

Many thanks for buying my book!

My name is David, and I am a professional English teacher and linguistics graduate from the UK. I have been teaching advanced English to professionals both online and in-person for over 10 years. During this time I have taught CEOs, managers, directors, designers, finance professionals from countries all around the world.

From my extensive teaching experience and knowledge of the English language, it is clear that the main grammatical difficulty that all learners of English encounter is that of verb tenses. Sometimes this difficulty can cause changes in meaning, especially in some important business contexts such as business introductions, which is where this book can help.

## **Who the book is for:**

This book is for people who want to boost their confidence and sound more professional in speaking and writing.

The aim of this book is

1. To take English learners on a journey through how each tense is used in simple, clear diagrams
2. To show how each tense can be used in business
3. To show how it tenses can be effectively mixed together

The book is split into 16 lessons, all of which focus on comparing specific verb tenses. I have tried to limit the text as much as possible, whilst still having detailed enough explanations to make everything clear. I have also tried to make all the visuals as 'attractive' as possible, as I believe that this is important in encouraging learners to internalise them.

The idea of each lesson is to take the learner on a journey of how to use each tense effectively. The lessons are all focused on business contexts which professionals need to use regularly, as well as areas where it is common to make mistakes which change the meaning.

As the book progresses, there are more and more visuals to show 'Mixing Verb Tenses', which are all examples of sentences using multiple tenses. I believe that this is important in helping learners to use these tenses in wider contexts, and to demonstrate that learners have a freedom to improvise with their active speaking.

Most lessons come complete with exercises, which are important to try not only for practice, but also to see each tense used in as wide a variety of contexts as possible. This is absolutely essential for boosting your confidence to use these tenses. I hope you enjoy the book, and I hope you find it useful!

# Lesson 1:

# Present Simple or Present Continuous

*I do or I am doing*

Lesson 1.1 - Business Contexts

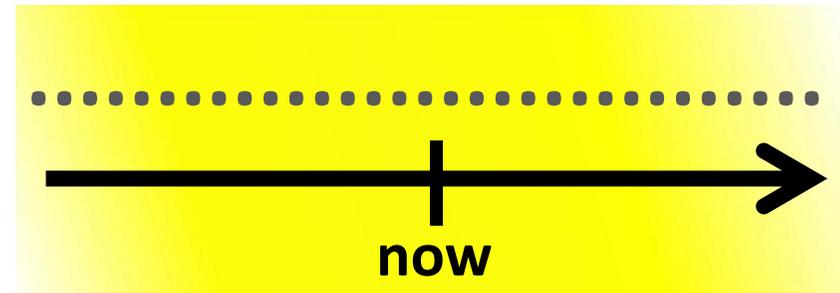
Lesson 1.2 - Charts and Changes

Lesson 1.3 - Words not used in Continuous Forms

With present simple and present continuous, we can actually just think of 1 rule. We will see how we can use this rule across all contexts..

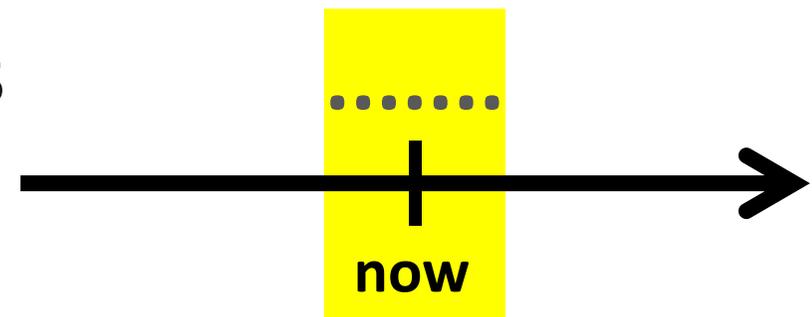
*I work at a law firm.*

**Present simple**  
for facts and general / long-term situations



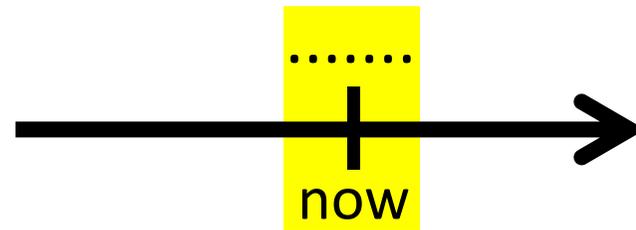
*I am working on a new project.*

**Present continuous**  
for temporary / short-term situations



We use present continuous with anything that is temporary. This means that it is very often used to talk about something you are temporarily working on, even if you are not doing it right now:

# I am doing



We ~~try~~ are trying to come up with a name for the new product.

I ~~study~~ am studying for my exam next month.

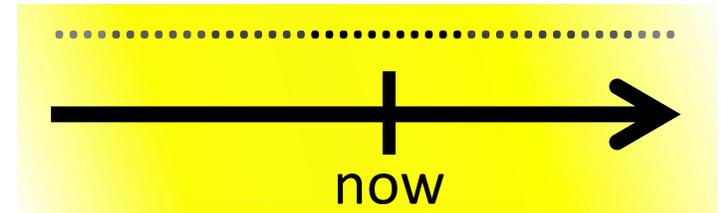
The company ~~hire~~ are hiring new staff at the moment.

We ~~prepare~~ are preparing for the monthly closing next week.

We often use present simple and present continuous together to talk about your permanent job position and then your current project:

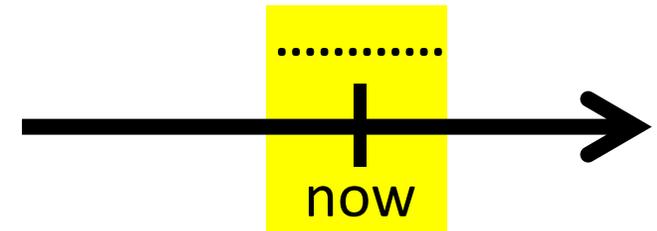
***I develop websites and apps.***

**Present Simple** to talk about a general, long-term situation



***I am currently developing a new app for our clients.***

**Present Continuous** to talk about a present temporary situation



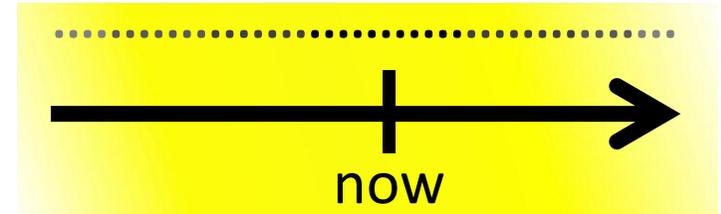
**Other Examples:** *I oversee all processes in the company. I am currently overseeing the new product launch.*

When we talk about things happening right now, we also use present continuous. These are also temporary situations:

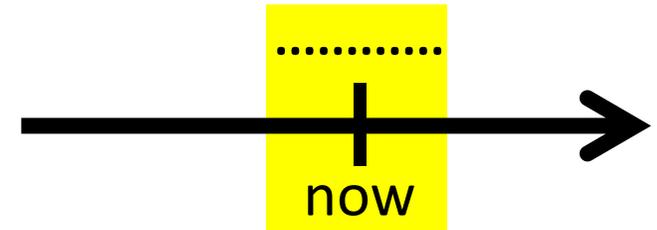
*Apologies, we don't normally have technical problems,*

*but we are experiencing some connection issues at the moment.*

**Present Simple** to talk about a general, long-term situation



**Present Continuous** to talk about a present temporary situation



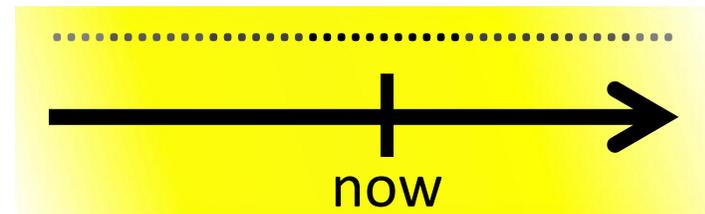
**Other Examples:**

*Normally it is very sunny here, but it is raining today.*

*I don't normally like seafood, but I'm really enjoying these shrimps.*

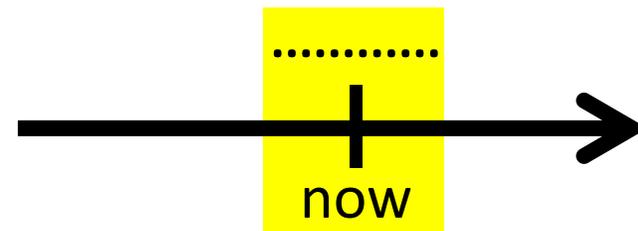
*I live in Madrid,*

**Present Simple** to talk about a general, long-term situation



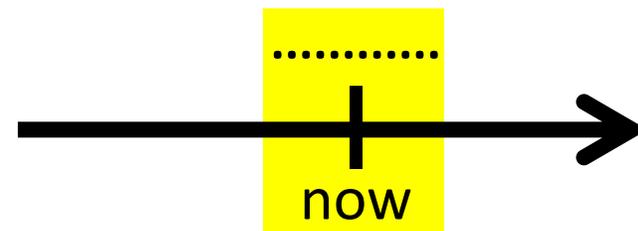
*but my husband is living in Finland for a year*

**Present Continuous** to talk about a present temporary situation



*because he is working there on a company project.*

**Present Continuous** to talk about a present temporary situation

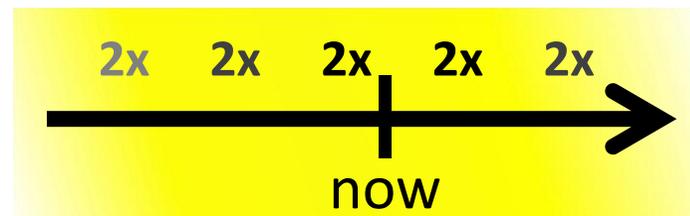


We also follow exactly the same rule with habits, which can also be long term or just temporary:

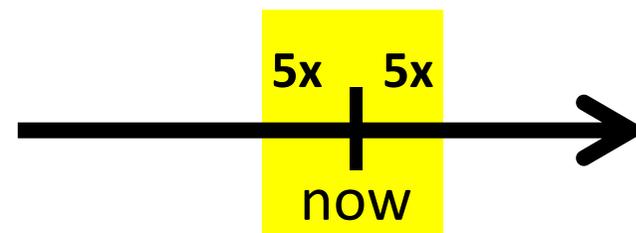
*Normally, we only meet 2 times per week to discuss the product,*

*but we are currently meeting 5 times per week to prepare for next month's final launch.*

Present Simple to talk about a general, long-term habit



Present Continuous to talk about a present temporary habit

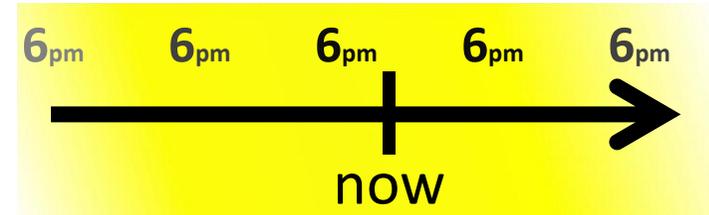


**Other Examples:**

*I normally go to the gym 2 times per week, but I'm currently going every day in order to get fit for next month's marathon.*

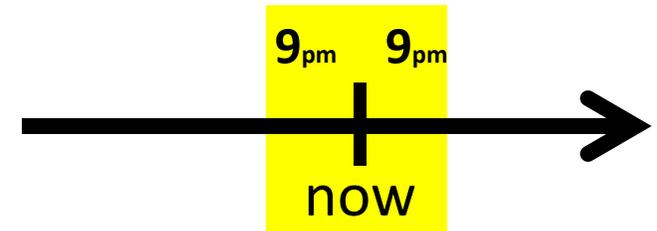
*I normally finish work at 6pm,*

**Present Simple** to talk about a general, long-term habit



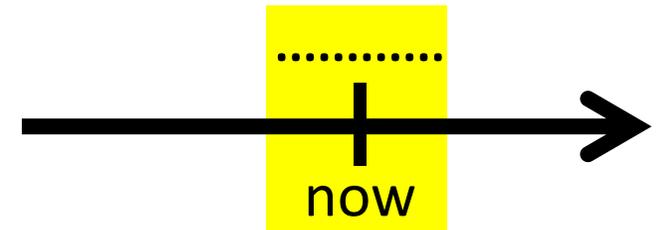
*but I'm currently finishing at 9pm,*

**Present Continuous** to talk about a present temporary habit



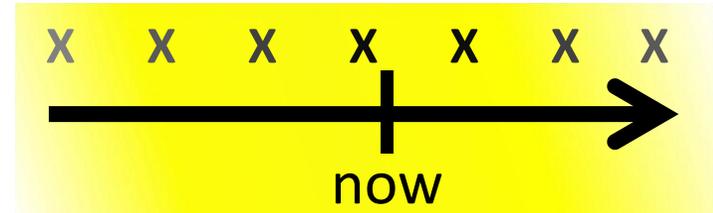
*because we are preparing for a big company event next week.*

**Present Continuous** to talk about a present temporary situation



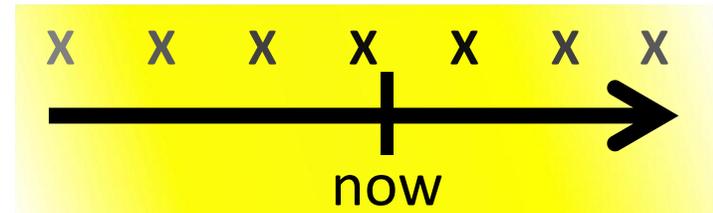
*Whenever I am in London*

**Present Simple** to talk about a general, long-term habit



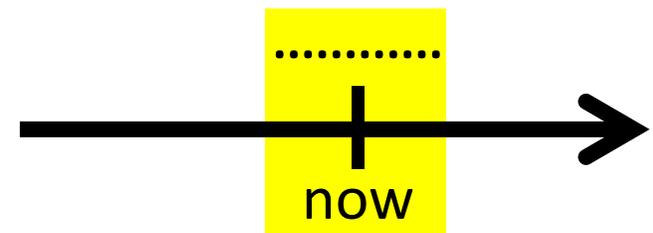
*I usually stay at the hotel opposite King's Cross station,*

**Present Simple** to talk about a general, long-term habit



*but I'm currently staying at the one opposite the conference centre.*

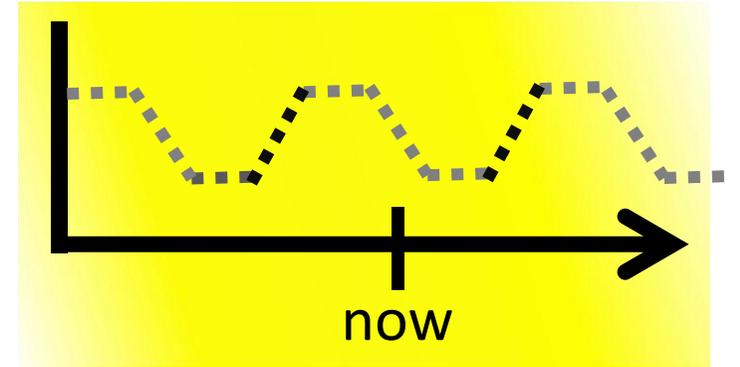
**Present Continuous** to talk about a present temporary situation



*Profits usually increase every summer.*

## Present Simple

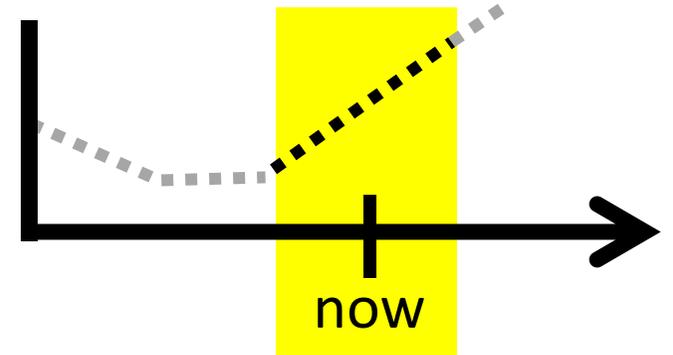
is used for long-term, repeating situations



*Profits are increasing.*

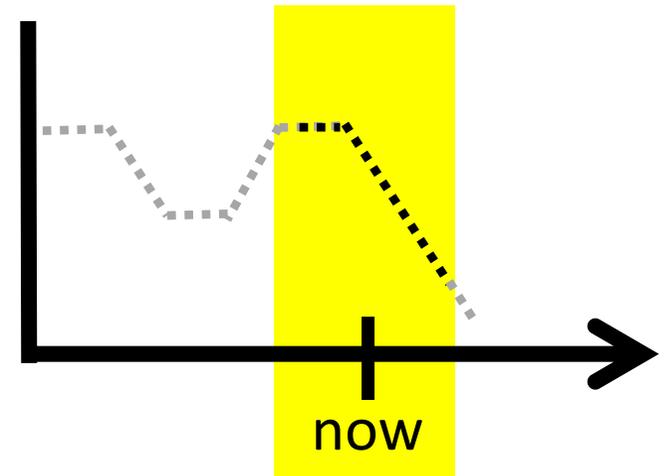
## Present Continuous

is used to describe the current situation



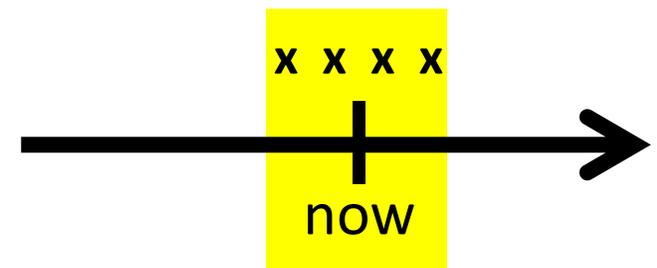
*Sales are falling  
rapidly at the  
moment,*

**Present Continuous** to talk  
about a present temporary  
situation



*so we are holding  
a  
lot of crisis meetings.*

**Present Continuous** to talk  
about a present temporary  
situation



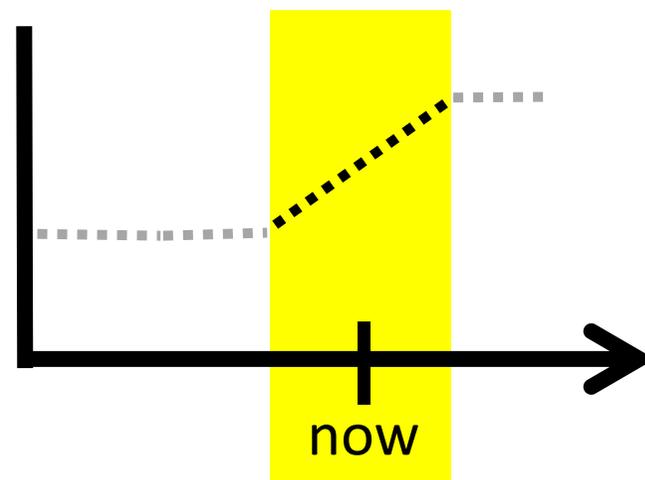
# Continuous forms with Changes

We also need to use present continuous with the verb 'become', because it talks about a temporary process. This is one verb that English learners often forget to use in present continuous:

*She is becoming a good manager.* ✓

*She becomes a good manager.* ✗

Present Continuous to talk about a present temporary situation



Even if she will be a good manager forever, the process of **becoming** a good manager is only temporary.

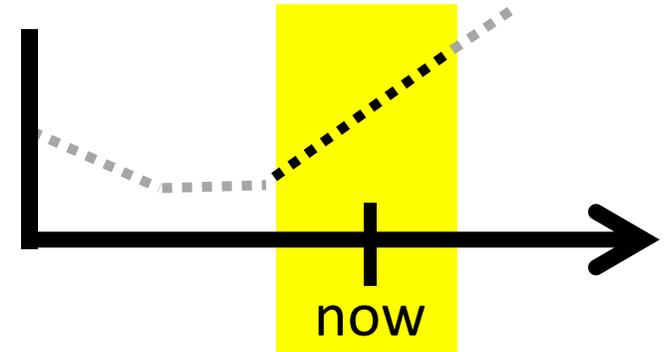
**Other Examples:** *We ~~become~~ are becoming an established company.*  
*The situation ~~becomes~~ is becoming very serious*

# Continuous forms with Changes

We also have the same situation with the verb 'get'. Of course we also use present simple for general situations:

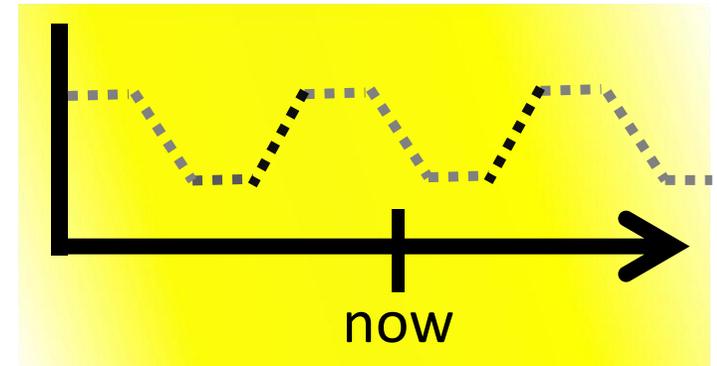
*The weather is getting very hot.*

**Present Continuous** to talk about a present temporary situation



*It normally gets really extreme at this time of year.*

**Present Simple** to talk about a general, long-term repeating situation



**Other Examples:** *I can feel that my English ~~gets~~ is getting better.*

*He ~~gets~~ is getting very frustrated with the current situation.*

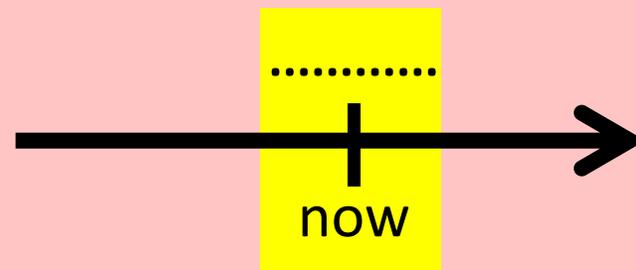
# Verbs that we don't use in Continuous Forms

Verbs	Examples
Verbs for giving your opinion: <i>I think / believe:</i>	<i>"I think it will work."</i>
Verbs of possession: <i>We have / we own:</i>	<i>"We have many qualities."</i>
Verbs of knowing: <i>I know / I understand:</i>	<i>"I know that it is going to be difficult."</i>
<i>He says / suggests / claims / states that...:</i>	<i>"John says that he has solved the issue."</i>
<i>It seems that / It appears that / It looks that..</i>	<i>"It appears that everything is going well."</i>
<i>I want / I need</i>	<i>"I want to thank you all for your hard work."</i>
<i>I hope / I wish</i>	<i>"I hope that the presentation will go well."</i>
<i>This email contains / includes</i>	<i>"This email contains important information."</i>
<i>It looks good / it sounds good</i>	<i>"The design looks great."</i>
<i>I promise that / I guarantee...</i>	<i>"I guarantee that I will send it to you by 9pm."</i>
<i>I apologize for...</i>	<i>"I apologise for the delay."</i>
<i>I predict that / We forecast that...</i>	<i>"I predict that sales will rise by 10% next year."</i>
<i>I admit that...</i>	<i>"I admit that I made some mistakes."</i>

# Current situations with verbs that are not usually used in the present continuous

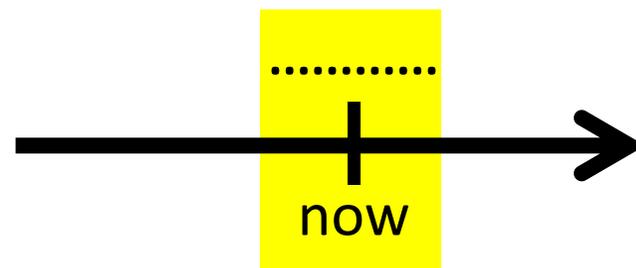
*John says*

A temporary situation, but we don't usually use present continuous with 'say', so we use **present simple**



*that the project is going very well.*

**Present Continuous** to talk about a present temporary situation



**Other Examples:**

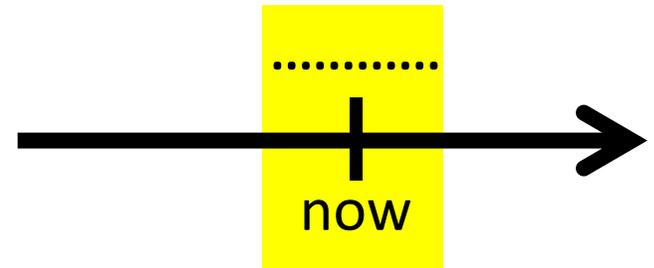
*The company claim that they are working hard to solve the problem.*

# Current situations with verbs that are not usually used in the present continuous

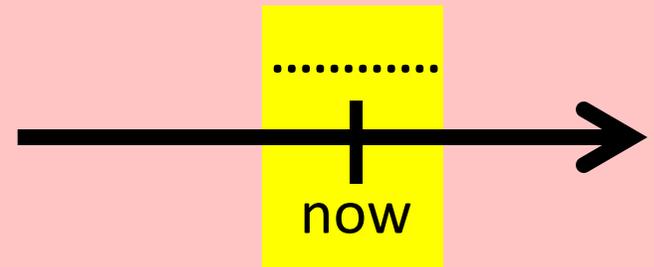
*All of the suggestions that you are making*

*sound really great!*

**Present Continuous** to talk about a present temporary situation



A temporary situation, but we don't usually use present continuous with 'sound', so we use **present simple**



## Other Examples:

*The presentation that they are putting together sounds really interesting.*  
*All of the plans that they are working on look really good.*

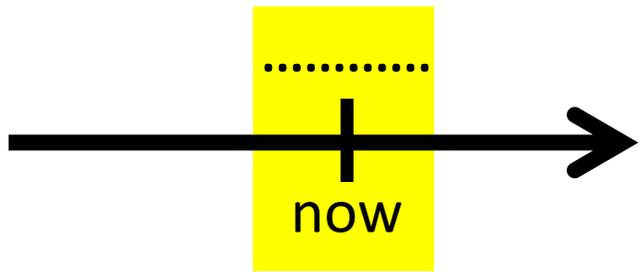
# Current situations with verbs that are not usually used in the present continuous

*We are experiencing some technical difficulties at the moment,*

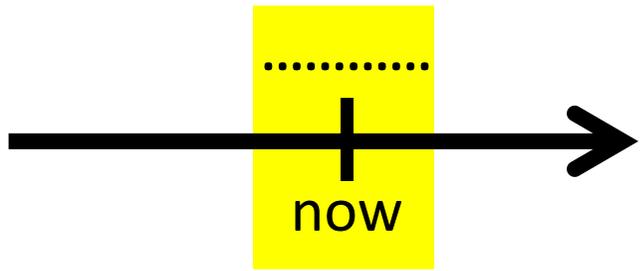
*but we are working to solve them as soon as possible.*

*We apologize for the inconvenience.*

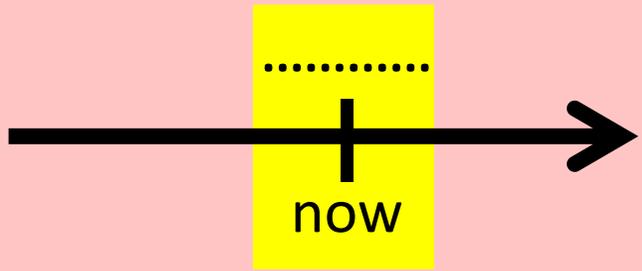
Present Continuous to talk about a present temporary situation



Present Continuous to talk about a present temporary situation



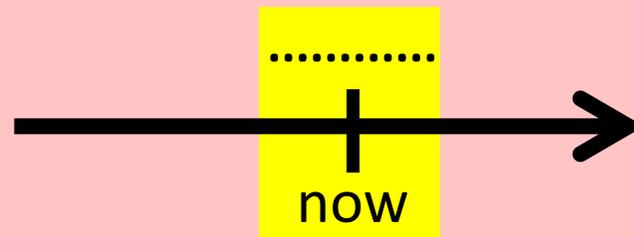
A temporary situation, but we don't usually use present continuous with 'apologize', so we use **present simple**



# Current situations with verbs that are not usually used in the present continuous

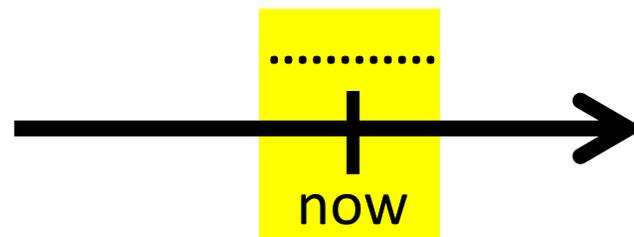
*We currently have a team of 6 staff,*

A temporary situation, but we can't use present continuous with 'have', when it refers to possession.



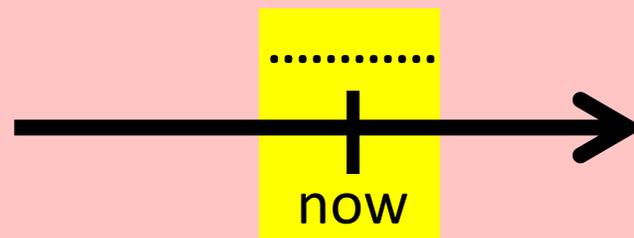
*who are all performing well,*

**Present Continuous** to refer to the current situation.  
(We could also use present simple here to say they generally always perform well)



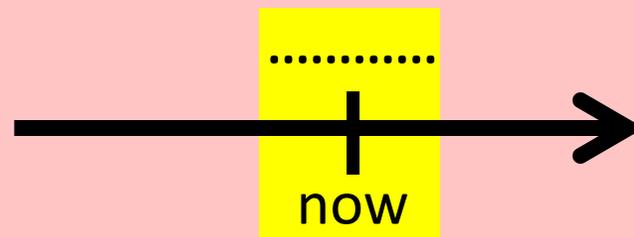
*but we need to add a few new people*

A temporary situation, but we can't use present continuous with 'need', so we use **present simple**



*because we want to increase our output.*

A temporary situation, but we don't usually use present continuous with 'want', so we use **present simple**



When we use 'have' for possession, we don't use present continuous. However, there are phrases with 'have' where we can use present continuous. These are the most useful ones:

have a discussion

have a conversation

have a chat

have a word with

have a problem

have lunch

have a good time

have difficulties

have / take a look at

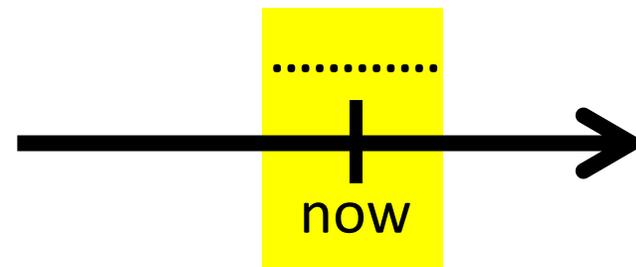
have / take a break

have / take a shower

have / host a party

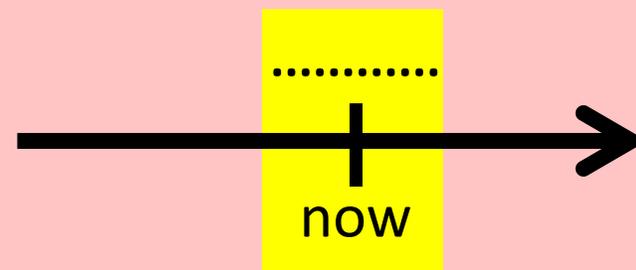
*We are having a quick break,*

**Present Continuous** to talk about a present temporary situation happening right now



*because we have a lot of work to finish today.*

A temporary situation, but we don't usually use present continuous with 'have' for possession, so we use **present simple**



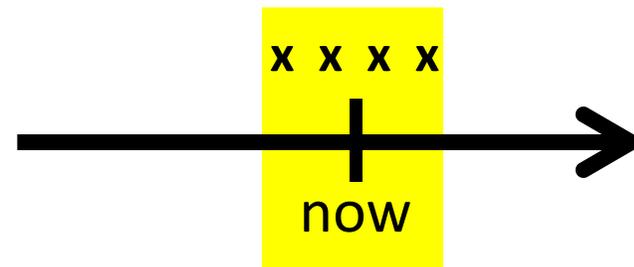
### Other Examples:

*We are having some difficulties at the moment because we don't have a big enough budget.*

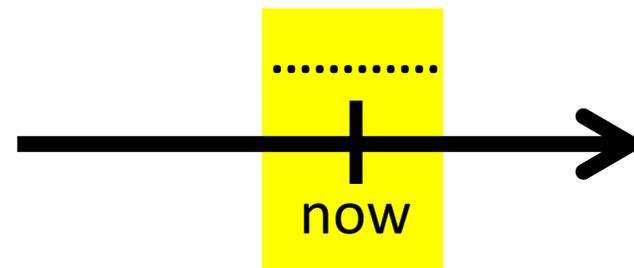
*Apparently, head office are having some intensive discussions about potential redundancies,*

*because the company is going through a difficult period at the moment.*

**Present Continuous** to talk about a present temporary habit / situation



**Present Continuous** to talk about a present temporary situation

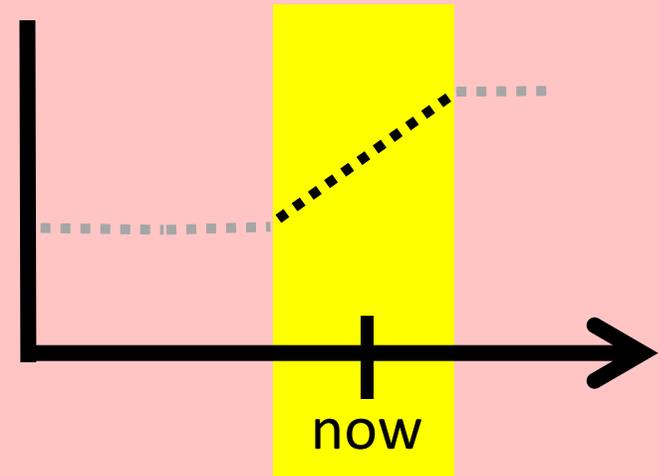


# Be Careful when Reading News Headlines

News headlines only use simple tenses. They use the present simple tense to talk about current situations. This is something which is only used in news headlines, and therefore if you don't write news headlines, then you will never need to use this style. It is worth mentioning this though, because if you read news in English often, it is important to recognise that the tenses in the headline are not standard English tenses:

**FUEL PRICES  
INCREASE RAPIDLY**

News headlines use **Present Simple** to talk about a temporary situation



Other Examples:

**HOUSE PRICES  
PLUMMET**

**GOVERNMENT  
PREPARES FOR WAR**

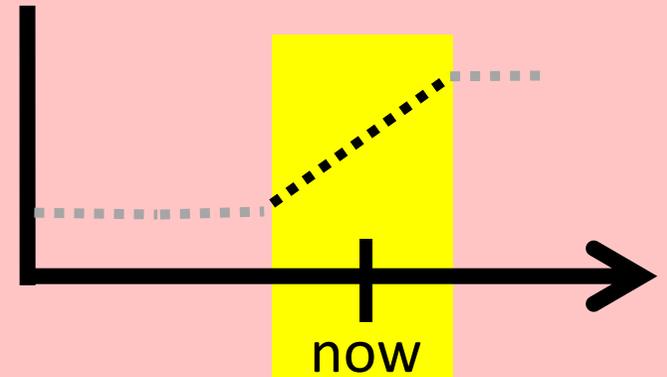
**SOLDIERS GATHER  
ON THE BORDER**

As soon as the news article begins, the verb tenses switch back to normal tenses:

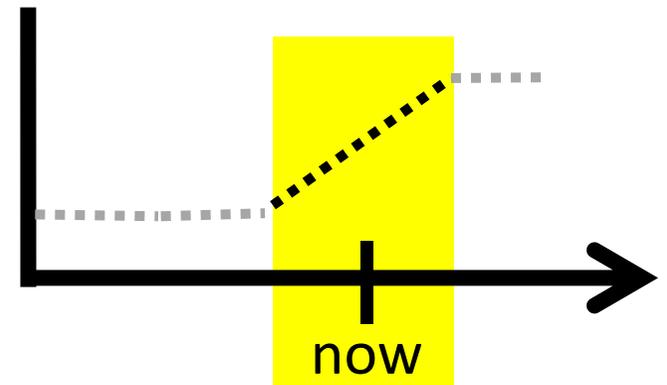
## FUEL PRICES INCREASE RAPIDLY

According to many sources, the price of heating is increasing dramatically across the country, causing real concerns for UK families.

News headlines use **Present Simple** to talk about a temporary situation



When the article begins, it switches back to standard verb tenses: **Present Continuous** to talk about a present temporary situation



Fill in the gaps with the correct form of the verb in brackets, using either the present simple or the present continuous tense

1. I \_\_\_\_\_ (have) a meeting with my staff every day.
2. I \_\_\_\_\_ (deal) with the problem right now.
3. Some of our technology \_\_\_\_\_ (become) quite old. We \_\_\_\_\_ (need) to upgrade some software.
4. I usually \_\_\_\_\_ (go) to the office 5 days per week, but I am a little unwell today so I \_\_\_\_\_ (work) from home.
5. Our company \_\_\_\_\_ (provide) services mainly to clients in Western Europe, but currently we \_\_\_\_\_ (discuss) an expansion into Eastern Europe.
6. Our audience \_\_\_\_\_ (respond) really well to our latest Facebook post.
7. This conference is really great. I \_\_\_\_\_ (make) a lot of new contacts, and I \_\_\_\_\_ (have) some really interesting discussions.
8. I \_\_\_\_\_ (speak) to local clients on the phone all the time, but we \_\_\_\_\_ (have) a project in the UK at the moment so I \_\_\_\_\_ (speak) English a lot more than usual. I \_\_\_\_\_ (think) I \_\_\_\_\_ (need) to improve it.
9. The offer \_\_\_\_\_ (look) pretty interesting, so we \_\_\_\_\_ (consider) it.
10. The company \_\_\_\_\_ (perform) really well at the moment. Hopefully it will continue!
11. We should go inside because it \_\_\_\_\_ (rain) and people \_\_\_\_\_ (get) wet.
12. We \_\_\_\_\_ (receive) 50 complaints per day about the new product. We should address this immediately because it \_\_\_\_\_ (damage) our reputation.
13. I \_\_\_\_\_ (run) social media campaigns for my clients. I \_\_\_\_\_ (run) an Instagram campaign for a clothing company at the moment, which \_\_\_\_\_ (go) really well.
14. I \_\_\_\_\_ (admit) that we \_\_\_\_\_ (not produce) the desired results at the moment.
15. I \_\_\_\_\_ (practice) my English speaking every day before next week's exam.
16. The new app design \_\_\_\_\_ (look) good. The developers \_\_\_\_\_ (test) it to check for any bugs.
17. Our revenue \_\_\_\_\_ (go down) and we \_\_\_\_\_ (need) to find out why as soon as possible.
18. Top management \_\_\_\_\_ (get) very angry when the figures fall below expectations, so I \_\_\_\_\_ (get) really nervous about the meeting with them tomorrow. I \_\_\_\_\_ (hope) that they will be understanding about the difficulties that we have faced recently.