

Simple present tense

1. Description

The **simple present** tense is often confusing for learners of English as it doesn't actually indicate a "present" time.

The **simple present** tense is a **constant** or **permanent** present which is used to describe things that are true, even if at the time of speaking they are not the case. So, the **simple present** describes things which are always true, or are repeatedly true or are generally true.

Verbs like **to live, to work, to get up, to have lunch** and any verbs concerning habits will usually need the **simple present** tense.

2. Affirmative form

The **simple present** tense uses the simple conjugation of the verb when speaking in the affirmative.

The **third person** takes an "s"

- I listen => he listens

Some verbs do not just take an "s":

- **To be:** I am - you are - he / she / it **is**
- **To have:** I have - you have - he / she / it **has**

Verbs that end in "o" take "es":

- To do: I do - you do - he / she / it **does**
- To go: I go - you go - he / she / it **goes**

3. Negative form

To form the negative structure in the simple present, we need the auxiliary do / does.

Reminder :

- I do - You do - **He / She / It does** - We do - You do - They do

Note that the main verb after the auxiliary **always reverts** to its **infinitive** form.

Let's use the example with the verb **to work** :

- I work. (affirmative) // I **don't work**. (negative)
- She works. (affirmative) // She **doesn't work**. (negative)
- He **makes** mistakes. // He **doesn't make** mistakes.
- She **speaks** Russian. // She **doesn't speak** Russian.

4. Interrogative form

To form the interrogative structure in the simple present, we need the auxiliary do / does.

The interrogative form has the same rules as the negative concerning the relation between the auxiliary and the main verb (always infinitive).

In closed questions (requiring a yes / no answer), the auxiliary opens the question.

- **Does** it **work**? Yes, it **does**. / No, it **doesn't**.
- **Do** you speak English? Yes I **do**. / No, I **don't**.

Note that when responding to **closed questions**, we use **short answers**.

These **short answers** always come back with the **auxiliary** and NOT with the **verb**.

Examples:

- **Do** you like it? – Yes, I **do**. (not Yes, I like)
- **Does** she eat fish? – Yes, she **does**. (not Yes, she eats)