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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## The Grammar Gameshow

The logo for BBC Learning English, featuring the letters 'BBC' in a white box above the words 'LEARNING ENGLISH' in white text on a teal background.

### The present simple and present continuous

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**Will**

Hello and welcome to today's Grammar Gameshow! I'm your host, Will! – not going to!  
And of course let's not forget Leslie, our all-knowing voice in the sky.

**Leslie**

Hello everyone!

**Will**

Tonight we're going to ask three questions about...

**Leslie**

The present simple and present continuous tenses.

**Will**

OK! Now, let's meet our contestants!

**Sarah**

Hi, everyone. I'm Sarah!

**Will**

Contestant number two?

**Jim**

Hi, Will. I'm Jim!

**Will**

Let's get going, and don't forget you can play along at home too. Our first round is a quick-fire round so get those fingers on those buzzers. I'm going to show you a sentence and I want to know if it's in the present simple tense or present continuous tense. One point for every correct answer! Ready? Let's Go!

'I never work very hard'

**Jim**

Present simple!

**Leslie**  
Correct!

**Will**  
'I'm sitting at home.'

**Sarah**  
Present continuous!

**Leslie**  
Correct!

**Will**  
'Are you having dinner?'

**Jim**  
Present continuous!

**Leslie**  
Correct!

**Will**  
'He doesn't know.'

**Sarah**  
Present simple!

**Leslie**  
Correct!

**Will**  
'Do you live here?'

**Jim**  
Present simple!

**Leslie**  
Correct!

**Will**  
'She isn't coming home today.'

**Sarah**

Present continuous!

**Leslie**

Correct!

**Will**

Tell them Leslie!

**Leslie**

Well done! The present simple is used for habits, permanent situations and truth and is formed using an -s on the verb in the third person affirmative, and do or does in questions and negatives. The present continuous talks about actions happening now or around now and is formed with be + ing.

**Will**

Good work. Let's count out the points! That's one for you and one for you, and two for you and one, two for you, and three for you and one, two, three for you. So Sarah has three and Jim has six!

**Sarah**

But...

**Will**

Let's move on to our second round. True or false: Both the present continuous and the present simple can be used to talk about the future.

**Sarah**

False! Only the present continuous can be used for the future. For example: 'I'm playing tennis tomorrow.'

**Will**

Leslie?

**Leslie**

Sorry, not quite right!

**Will**

Jim, would you like to give it a try? She said false and was wrong so...

**Jim**

Errrrr...True?

**Will**

Leslie?

**Leslie**

Yes. That's right. The present continuous can be used for future arrangements, such as 'I'm having dinner tomorrow.' But the present simple can also be used for the future for timetabled events, such as aeroplanes. For example, 'My flight leaves at 6.30 tomorrow.'

**Will**

Good job Jim! Have 30 points!

**Sarah**

30 points! What...

**Will**

OK. It's time for our final question. Fingers on the buzzers. When can the present simple be used with a present continuous meaning?

**Jim**

Sorry I got overexcited!

**Sarah**

I know, I know! When you use a state verb!

**Will**

Leslie?

**Leslie**

Well done, Sarah. State verbs – for example, need - cannot be used continuously. You cannot say I am needing, but only I need – even if we mean right now.

**Will**

Well done Sarah! Good answer. You can have one point!

**Sarah**

Oh come on...how about two?

**Will**

Alright, two then, but no ice cream. Well, that brings us to the end of today's Grammar gameshow. Let's count out the points. And the winner is... Sarah with 31 points. Well done! Here's what you've won!

**Sarah**

I've won a holiday!

**Will**

No, no! You've won a picture of a holiday. But I went there last year and it was lovely. And how did you do at home? We'll see you again next week, where you can play for an even bigger prize. And Jim? You tried hard, but lost. How do you feel?

**Jim**

Well, not too bad to be honest...

**Will**

Release the dogs! It looks like we'll need another contestant. Thanks for joining us. Say goodbye Leslie.

**Leslie**

Goodbye Leslie

**Will**

See you next time.