

OXFORD



CANADIAN
GRAMMAR
SPECTRUM

REFERENCE AND PRACTICE

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Present Progressive or Simple Present?

1 Now or sometimes?



MILA VARGAS IS A TV REPORTER.



MILA IS ON GUY'S TALK SHOW.

PRESENT PROGRESSIVE

We use the Present Progressive for something happening now. *I am speaking to you live* means that Mila is in the middle of a live broadcast.

Here are some more examples.

It's raining right now.

I'm watching this show.

Look. That man is taking a photo of you.

SIMPLE PRESENT

We use the Simple Present for repeated actions. *I often speak live to the camera* means that she does it again and again.

It always rains on the weekend.

I watch television most weekends.

He's a photographer. He takes lots of photos.

2 Thoughts, feelings, and states

We normally use the Simple Present to talk about thoughts and feelings.

I think it's a good show. Mila likes her job.

We also use it to talk about states and permanent facts.

Reporting means a lot to her. Paper burns easily.

We also use the Simple Present in **I promise, I agree, I refuse**, etc.

I promise I'll write to you. It's all right. I forgive you.

3 Temporary or permanent?

PRESENT PROGRESSIVE

We use the Present Progressive for a routine or situation that we see as temporary (for a short period).

I'm working at a community centre for six weeks.

Right now they're living in a very small apartment.

SIMPLE PRESENT

We use the Simple Present for a routine or situation that we see as permanent.

I work at a community centre. It's a permanent job. They live in a very nice apartment.

4 Always

PRESENT PROGRESSIVE

We can use **always** with the Present Progressive to mean "very often," usually with the added meaning of "too often."

Effem is always inviting friends here.

(= He invites them very often.)

I'm always making careless mistakes.

(= I make careless mistakes too often.)

SIMPLE PRESENT

Always with the Simple Present means "every time."

Effem always invites us for dinner on Sunday.

(= He invites us every Sunday.)

I always make careless mistakes on tests.

(= I make mistakes on every test.)

Practice

A Present Progressive or Simple Present? (1–2)

At work, Martin is talking to Alain in the hallway. Complete their conversation.

Write the Present Progressive or Simple Present form of the verbs.

Martin: ► *Are you looking*... (you/look) for someone?

Alain: Yes, ► *I need*... (I/need) to speak to Neil. He isn't in his office.

Martin: (1) (he/talk) to the boss right now.

(2) (I/think)

(3) (they/discuss) money.

Alain: Oh, right. And what about you? (4) (you/look) for someone, too?

Martin: Yes—Linda. (5) (you/know) where she is?

Alain: Oh, she isn't here today. She only (6) (work) four days a week.

(7) (she/not/work) on Fridays. She'll be here on Monday.

Martin: Thank you. (8) (you/know) a lot about Linda.

Alain: Well, most days (9) (I/give) her a ride, or

(10) (she/give) me one. (11)

(she/live) very close to me. (12) (it/save) gas.

Martin: Yes, (13) (I/agree). Good idea.

Well, (14) (I/waste) my time here then. I'll get back to my computer.

B Present Progressive or Simple Present? (1–3)

Complete the sentences. Write the Present Progressive or Simple Present form of the verbs.

► *I'm writing*. (I/write) to my parents. *I write*... (I/write) to them every weekend.

1 (it/snow) outside. (it/come) down pretty hard—look.

2 Normally (I/start) work at eight o'clock, but (I/start) at seven this week. We're very busy right now.

3 My car is in the garage, so (I/go) to work on the bus this week. Usually (I/drive) to work.

4 The sun (rise) in the east, remember. It's behind us so (we/travel) west.

5 I'm afraid I have no time to help you now. (I/write) a report. But (I/promise) I'll give you some help later.

6 (I/want) a new car. (I/save) up to buy one.

C Always (4)

Complete the sentences. Use *always* and the Present Progressive or Simple Present.

► Vivienne: Yuri talks too much, doesn't he?

Keisha: Yes, and *he's always talking*... about hockey.

► Courtney: You forget your keys every time.

Marc: I try to remember them, but *I always forget*.....

1 Cameron: Sarah takes the train every day, doesn't she?

Danilo: Yes, the train.

2 Patti: Janna misses lectures way too often, in my opinion.

Kerry: I agree. lectures.

3 Mike: Every time I drive along here, I go the wrong way.

Nicolette: But it's very simple, isn't it? Why the wrong way?

4 Dani: Jesse and Jeff argue too much, I think.

June: I know.

Past Progressive or Simple Past?

1 Introduction

A reporter is interviewing Gilbert and Ruby.

Reporter: *Gilbert and Ruby, tell me what you **saw**.*

Ruby: *Well, when we **were driving** home last night, we **saw** a strange object in the sky.*

Gilbert: *As we **were coming** down the hill into town, it just suddenly **appeared** in front of us. We **stopped** the car and **got** out.*

Ruby: *It **was** a very clear night. The stars **were twinkling**.*

Gilbert: *It **was** a spaceship. It **seemed** very big. It **had** some strange writing on the side. And a light **was flashing** on the top.*

Ruby: *As we **were watching** it, it suddenly **flew** away and **disappeared**.*

PAST PROGRESSIVE	SIMPLE PAST
We use the Past Progressive for an action that we were in the middle of. <i>We were driving home.</i> (We were in the middle of our trip.) <i>A light was flashing.</i>	We use the Simple Past for a complete action in the past. <i>We drove home.</i> (We finished our trip.) <i>The spaceship flew away.</i>
We do not normally use the Past Progressive for states. NOT <i>The spaceship was seeming...</i> NOT <i>It was having writing...</i> NOT <i>I wasn't knowing...</i>	We also use the Simple Past (not normally the Progressive) for states. <i>The spaceship seemed very big.</i> <i>It had writing on the side.</i> <i>I didn't know what it was.</i>

2 It happened as I was driving

We often use the Past Progressive and Simple Past together when one (shorter) action comes in the middle of another (longer) one.

*As we **were driving** down the hill, a strange object **appeared** in the sky.*

*While Laura **was sitting** in the yard, it suddenly **began** to rain.*

*You **drove** right past me when I **was waiting** for the bus.*

The appearance of the strange object comes in the middle of the longer action, the drive down the hill.

Longer action: *We **were driving** down the hill.*

Shorter action: *An object **appeared**.*

In the three sentences above, the Past Progressive comes after **as**, **while** or **when** (*As we **were driving** ...*). We can also use **when** before the Simple Past.

*We **were driving** down the hill **when** a strange object **appeared** in the sky.*

*Amed **was making** lunch **when** the phone **rang**.*

But we use two Simple Past verbs for one action after another.

*When we **saw** the spaceship, we **stopped** the car. (= We saw it and then we stopped.)*

3 The sun was shining

PAST PROGRESSIVE	SIMPLE PAST
We often use the Past Progressive to describe the background. <i>The sun was shining.</i> <i>The stars were twinkling.</i>	We use the Simple Past for actions in a story. <i>We arrived at the beach.</i> <i>The aliens landed quietly.</i>

Practice

A Past Progressive or Simple Past? (1–2)

Jeff is always having accidents. His girlfriend Shannon is talking about some of the accidents. Write her sentences from these notes. Each sentence has one verb in the Past Progressive and one in the Simple Past.

- ▶ when/he/carry/a suitcase/he/drop/it/on his foot
When he was carrying a suitcase, he dropped it on his foot.
- ▶ he/break/his leg/when/he/ski
He broke his leg when he was skiing.
- 1 he/sit down/on a chair/while/I/paint/it
.....
- 2 as/he/run/for a bus/he/collide/with a lamppost
.....
- 3 his hair/catch/fire/when/he/fry/onion rings
.....
- 4 when/he/hold/a beautiful vase/he/suddenly/drop/it
.....
- 5 he/sit/in the backyard/when/a bee/sting/him/on the nose
.....

B Past Progressive or Simple Past? (1–2)

Write the correct form of the verb.

- Sandy: I hear the lights (▶) *went* (go) out in your building last night.
- Kaya: Yes, (▶) *I was watching* (I/watch) a documentary on TV when suddenly (1) (we/lose) all power. But (2) (it/come) on again after about ten minutes.
- Jenny: Jeanne (3) (come) down the stairs when the lights (4) (go) out. She almost (5) (fall) over.
- Ricardo: Matthew and I (6) (play) cards at the time.
- Joe: (7) (I/work) on the computer. (8) (I/lose) a whole hour's work. But this morning (9) (I/get) up early and (10) (do) it again.

C Past Progressive or Simple Past? (1–3)

Find the second part of each sentence. Write each verb in the correct form.

- ▶ Lian (have) a beautiful dream when she (touch) the wire.
- ▶ When Georges (see) the question, when I (find) a ten-dollar bill in it.
- 1 The train (wait) when the alarm clock (ring).
- 2 I (read) a library book the crowd (rush) in.
- 3 Arianna (get) an electric shock he (know) the answer immediately.
- 4 When the doors (open), they (see) that the sun (shine).
- 5 When the campers (wake), when we (arrive) at the station.
- ▶ *Lian was having a beautiful dream when the alarm clock rang.*
- ▶ *When Georges saw the question, he knew the answer immediately.*
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Present Perfect or Simple Past? (1)

1 I have done or I did?



The Present Perfect tells us about the past and the present. The Rockets have won the cup, so it's theirs now.

The Simple Past tells us about the past, a time which is finished. Last year is in the past.

We use the Simple Past (not the Present Perfect) to talk about times in the past such as **yesterday**, **last week**, **in 1994**, **a hundred years ago**.

*We **watched** a game **last week**.* NOT *We ~~have watched~~ a game ~~last week~~.*

***Long ago** dinosaurs **lived** here.* NOT *~~Long ago~~ dinosaurs ~~have lived~~ here.*

Here are some more examples.

PRESENT PERFECT

*Faye **has packed** her suitcase.*
(So her things are in the suitcase now.)
*Manuel **has fixed** the chair.*
(So it's all right now.)
*The plane **has just landed**.*
*I **'ve turned** the heat on.* (It's on now.)
*I **'ve dropped** my calculator.* (It's on the floor now.)

SIMPLE PAST

*Faye **packed** her suitcase **last night**.*
(Her things may be unpacked now.)
*Manuel **fixed** the chair.*
(It may be broken again now.)
*The plane **landed ten minutes ago**.*
*I **turned** the heat on **earlier**, but it's off again now.*
*I **dropped** my calculator, but it seems to be OK.*

2 I've done it. I did it yesterday.

Komoko: *We **'ve bought** a new car.*

Tom: *Oh, have you? What kind?*

Komoko: *A Prius. We **bought** it last week.*

We often give a piece of news in the Present Perfect, e.g. *We **'ve bought** a new car.* (The car is ours now.)

We use the Simple Past, e.g. *We **bought** it last week,* to give details or to ask for details about things such as when and where it happened.

Here are some more examples.

*I **'ve found** my wallet. ~ Oh, good. Where **did** you **find** it?*

*Your package **has arrived**. The mail carrier **brought** it at eight o'clock.*

*They **'ve closed** the factory. ~ Really? When **did** they **do** that?*

3 Structures with for, since, and last

PRESENT PERFECT

We can say that something hasn't happened for a long time or since a specific time in the past.
*We **haven't had** a party **since** Halloween.*

SIMPLE PAST

We can say that it was a long time since something happened or when was the last time it happened.
*Halloween was **the last time** we **had** a party.*

Practice

A I have done or I did? (1)

Write the correct verb form.

- ▶ I've done (I/do) all the housework. The apartment is really clean now.
- ▶ A young couple bought (buy) the house next door. But they didn't live there long.
- 1 Our guests (arrive). They're sitting in the living room.
- 2 There's still a problem with the television. Someone (fix) it, but then it broke again.
- 3 (I/lose) my bank card. I can't find it anywhere.
- 4 The game (start). The Jets are playing well.
- 5 My dog (run) away from home. But she came back two days later.
- 6 Daniel (earn) some money last week. But he's already spent it all.
- 7 (we/plant) an apple tree in the yard. Unfortunately, it died.
- 8 Prices (go) up. Everything is more expensive this year.
- 9 Someone (turn) on the radio. What's that song called?
- 10 (I/call) the office at eleven to speak to the manager, but he isn't there today.
- 11 (I/make) a cake. Would you like a piece?
- 12 The runner Haile Gebrselassie (break) the world record for the marathon in 2007. Then one year later, he ran it in an even faster time.

B I've done it. I did it yesterday. (2)

Things that have happened today are on the radio and TV news.

Report the news using the Present Perfect and Simple Past.

- ▶ the prime minister/visit McGill University/speak to students there/earlier today
The prime minister has visited McGill University. He spoke to students there earlier today.
- 1 the bus drivers/go on strike/stop work/at twelve o'clock
.....
- 2 the Governor General/arrive in Toronto/fly there/in a helicopter
.....
- 3 two men/escape from Kingston Penitentiary/get away/during the night
.....
- 4 the author Yann Martel/write a new book/it come out/last week
.....
- 5 Sharon Cherop/win the women's marathon/run it/in 2 hours 22 minutes
.....

C Structures with for, since, and last (3)

Complete the conversations.

- ▶ Varun: This car is filthy. I haven't been to the car wash for about a year.
Sanjay: What! You mean it's been twelve months *since you last went* to the car wash?
- 1 Laura: I haven't used my camera recently. June was the last time I took a photo.
Salma: Really? I'm surprised you June.
- 2 Gloria: I haven't seen Andrew for weeks.
Naeem: I haven't either. It's been him.
- 3 Kim: What about a game of cards? We haven't played since your birthday.
Eugenia: Really? You mean my birthday cards?
- 4 Isa: I feel terrible. It's been three days since I ate anything.
Anna: What did you say? You three days?

Present Perfect or Simple Past? (2)

1 I've been or I was?



PRESENT PERFECT

We use the Present Perfect for a state which has gone on up to the present. (David is still in the hospital.)

*We've **lived here** for ten years.*
(And we still live here.)

SIMPLE PAST

We use the Simple Past for a state in the past, in a period which is finished. (David's stay in the hospital is over.)

*We **lived there** for ten years.*
(We don't live there now.)

2 Have you (ever) ...? and Did you (ever) ...?

PRESENT PERFECT

We use the Present Perfect for actions in a period of time up to the present.

*This young director **has made** four movies so far. He **has made** movies means that it is possible he will make more movies.*

Here are some more examples.

***Have you ever been** to Peru? ~ Yes, twice.
I've played lacrosse before.
We've never had any money.*

SIMPLE PAST

We use the Simple Past for actions in the past, a period which is finished.

*The director **made** many movies in his long career. He **made** movies means that his career in movies is over. He won't make any more.*

***Did Mom ever go** to Peru? ~ Yes, I think so.
I played lacrosse in college.
We never had any money in those days.*

3 Today, this week, etc.

PRESENT PERFECT

We use **today** and phrases with **this** for a period up to the present.

***It hasn't snowed today.**
Have you seen this week's magazine?*

SIMPLE PAST

We use **yesterday** and phrases with **last** for a past period.

***It snowed yesterday.**
Did you see last week's magazine?*

But sometimes **today** etc. can mean a past period. Compare:

***I haven't seen** Hannah **today**.
(It's still daytime.)
Has the mail come this morning?
(It's still morning.)*

***I didn't see** Hannah at work **today**.
(The working day is over.)
Did the mail come this morning?
(It's later in the day.)*

Practice

A I've been or I was? (1)

Complete this letter to a newspaper. Write the Present Perfect or Simple Past.

A few days ago I (▶) *learned* (learn) that someone plans to tear down the Grand Central Tavern. This bar (▶) *has been* (be) an important part of our town for decades. It (1) (stand) on Main Street for 50 years. It (2) (be) famous in the old days, and some of the old Maple Leafs (3) (drink) there, they say. I (4) (live) in Essex all my life. The locals (5) (know) about the plans for less than a week and already there's a "Save Our Bar" campaign. Last week we (6) (be) happy, but this week we're angry. We will stop them, you'll see.

B Have you (ever) ...? and Did you (ever) ...? (2)

Look at each conversation and choose the best sentence, a) or b).

- ▶ Have you heard about the woman walking across Canada? ~ Yes, she's reached the Rockies.
a) The walk is continuing. b) The walk has finished.
- 1 Have you ever played beach volleyball? ~ Yes, we played it on vacation.
a) The vacation is still going on. b) The vacation is over.
- 2 Did you know old Mr. Rajabi? ~ No, I never met him.
a) Mr. Rajabi is probably alive. b) Mr. Rajabi is probably dead.
- 3 Sean McInnis is a great curler. ~ Yes, he's helped the Canadian team win many games.
a) Sean McInnis still plays for the team. b) Sean McInnis has left the team.

C Today, this week, etc. (3)

Write *this, last, today, or yesterday*.

- ▶ *Last* month prices went up, but *this* month they have fallen a little.
- 1 It's been dry so far week, but week was very wet.
- 2 I went shopping earlier and spent all the money I earned
- 3 We didn't have many visitors year. We've had a lot more year.
- 4 I don't feel so tired now. We got up very late morning. I felt really tired when we got up so early.

D Present Perfect or Simple Past? (Pages 6 and 8)

Write the verbs.

- Noa: (▶) *Have you heard* (you/hear) the news about David?
Holly: No. (1) (what/happen)?
Noa: (2) (he/have) an accident. He was walking down some stairs.
(3) (he/fall) and (4) (break) his leg.
Holly: Oh, how awful! When (5) (it/happen)?
Noa: Yesterday afternoon. Melanie (6) (tell) me about it last night.
Holly: Last night! (7) (you/know) about it since last night, and
(8) (you/not/tell) me!
Noa: Well, (9) (I/not/see) you last night. And
(10) (I/not/see) you today, until now.
Holly: I hope he's all right. (11) (he/have) lots of accidents, you know. (12) (he/do) the same thing about two years ago.