

The Simple Present Tense: Statements and Questions

Simple Present: Affirmative Statements

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| I You We You They | work. | 1. Use a subject and verb. Add -s, -es, -ies to the third person singular form. (See Spelling Rules for adding -s to verbs.) 2. Use the third person singular form for singular nouns: |
| He She It | works. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Maria works in a bank.</i> • <i>The manager likes Maria.</i> |

Simple Present: Negative Statements

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|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-------|---|
| I You We You They | do not (don't) | work. | 1. Use do + not and does + not to make the action. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I do not play lacrosse.</i> • <i>My brother does not sell computers.</i> |
| He She It | does not (doesn't) | work. | 2. Use contractions (short forms) in informal speaking and writing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I don't play basketball.</i> • <i>My sister doesn't work in a bank.</i> |

Simple Present Yes / No Questions:

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|------|--|-------|--|
| Does | he she it your brother the teacher | work? | 1. Use "do" or "does + subject + BASE form of the verb." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Does your friend go to school in the evening??</i> • <i>Does Maria study at home?</i> • <i>Do the computers run fast?</i> • <i>Do the teachers meet after school?</i> |
| Do | they you your brothers the teachers | work? | 2. No! Don't use the -s form of the verb with "do" or does." Does Tom likes basketball? = Does Tom like basketball? |

Simple Present: Wh- (information) Questions

| | | | | |
|-----------|------|---------------------------------|-------|--|
| When | does | he she it your brother | work? | 1. Use a "Wh-" word + "do" or "does + subject + BASE form of the verb." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>When does Maria go to school?</i> • <i>What does Sarah play?</i> |
| How often | do | they you your brothers | work? | 2. For questions about the subject (Who / What) use the main verb without the helping words do or does . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Who repairs computers?</i> • <i>What happens in the evenings?</i> |

The Simple Present Tense: Grammar Notes

1. Use the simple present tense to talk about daily life, routines, repeated actions .

- *I usually get up at 6:00 AM.*
- *Tom never leaves the house before 7:00.*
- *Do Maria and Robert work in the city?*
- *When does the family eat dinner?*

2. Use the simple present tense to talk about customs, cultural practices, and

- *Americans celebrate Thanksgiving in November.*
- *Muslims generally do not eat pork.*
- *Do the people of Uruguay eat a lot of meat?*
- *How do people marry in your culture?*

3. Use the simple present tense to talk about scientific facts and things that are always true.

- *Water freezes at 0 degrees Celsius.*
- *Automobiles produce a lot of pollution.*

4. Use the verb BE in the simple present tense to describe things. Do not use **do** or **does**. (See page A-1 for the forms of BE in the simple present tense.)

- *The computer is broken.*
- *The students are not ready for the test.*
- *Is the new computer expensive*
- *Where are the children?*

5. Use **adverbs of frequency** to describe how often something happens.

a. Frequency adverbs come before the verb except for the verb **be**:

- She **always** leaves at 7:00 am.
- She is **always** on time.

b. Don't start a sentence with **always** or **never**.

- **Always** I work late. = I always work late.
- **Never** the students are on time. = The students are never on time.

c. Don't use **never**, **seldom**, or **rarely** with a negative verb.

- They **don't never play** computer games. = They never play computer games.
- She **doesn't rarely study** at night. = She rarely studies at night.
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| Frequency Adverbs | How often? |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| always | ↑ 100% 50% ↓ 0% |
| almost always | |
| frequently | |
| often / usually | |
| sometimes | |
| rarely / seldom | |
| almost never | |
| never | |

6. Use **time expressions** with the simple present tense. Put them at the beginning or end of the sentence.

- *Our team practices every day.*
- *Once a week they play against another team.*
- *Fridays I leave work early.*

Common Time Expressions:

every day (every evening, every month, Monday, etc.)
 Mondays (Wednesdays, etc.)
 once a week (twice a month, three times a year, etc.)
 during the week (month, year, etc.)
 throughout the day (week, year, etc.)

Simple Present Tense: Intermediate and Advanced Topics

7. Use the simple present to talk about future plans that are scheduled, especially in timetables.

- *My plane leaves at 6:15.*
- *Tomorrow at 11:00 our group visits the Museum of Modern Art and. Then we eat lunch from 12:00 – 1:00. The bus leaves at 1:30.*

8. Use the simple present tense in the *historic present*, describing past events with the present tense to show currency or immediacy.

Newspaper headlines: *Man Finds a Million Dollars*
 Study Shows Chocolate Lowers Anxiety

Jokes: *A man walks into a bar with his chicken....*

Re/telling of narratives: *I saw a great movie last night. It's about a man who sails alone around the world. During the adventure he meets all kinds of interesting people who teach him lessons about life. In the end, he returns home with a better outlook.*

Discussing authors' ideas: *In his book "Troubled Waters" Tyler explores the issue of teenage depression. He sees the recent rise in diagnoses as troubling and hopes to see more government funding to study this problem. He writes, "Without this funding, it will be impossible to get reliable information to help our teens" (65).*

9. Use the *emphatic affirmative do/does to* show that the situation is opposite from what the listener believes.

- *Teacher: Tomas, I wish you would study before the tests.*
Tomas: I do study before tests. I usually study at least 6 hours for every test.
- *Boss: Why doesn't Linda have a cell phone yet?*
Jane: She does have one, but she won't give the number out to just anybody.

ESL Study Hall

