

Present simple

English A1

What this topic teaches

The **present simple** is the tense of things that are always true: habits , routines and facts . *I walk to school. The sun rises in the east. My cat sleeps twenty hours a day.*

- Chinese verbs never change: the verb never changes for any person, any day, forever. English verbs mostly stay calm too – except for one small, loud exception.
- That exception: **he, she, it** add **-s** to the verb. *I walk, you walk, she walks.*
- Memory hook: the third-person **-s** is the smallest letter with the biggest ego. It only appears for *he, she, it*, but it appears **every single time**.
- – *He likes cats.* One little letter. A thousand lost exam marks.

The forms: calm verbs, one loud exception

Person	Form	Example
I / you / we / they	walk / like	I walk to school.
he / she / it	walks / likes	She likes cats.

The spelling dances from plurals return for the verb:

Ending	The dance	Example
-s, -sh, -ch, -x, -o	add -es	watch → watches, go → goes
consonant + y	y → ies	study → studies, fly → flies
everything else	just add -s	play → plays, eat → eats

- △ *have* breaks the pattern completely: *he has*. Of course it does. The most common verb wrote its own rules.
- Same dances as plural nouns, same logic: the verb wants to be easy to say.

Negatives and questions: enter do and does

The present simple cannot flip like *be*. It hires a helper: **do** (and **does** for he/she/it).

	Statement	Negative	Question
I / you / we / they	I like tea.	I don't like tea.	Do you like tea?
he / she / it	He likes tea.	He doesn't like tea.	Does he like tea?

- After *do/does/don't/doesn't*, the verb goes back to its base form : *Does she like cats?* – never “*Does she likes?*”
- Memory hook: *does* eats the -s. *She likes cats* → *Does she like cats?* The -s moves house into *does*, and the main verb relaxes.

- Short answers use the helper: *Do you like tea?* – *Yes, I do.* / *No, I don't.* Never “*Yes, I like.*”

Adverbs of frequency

How often? These words sit **before** the main verb (but after *be*).

always – usually – often – sometimes – never

- *I **always** walk to school. She **often** eats noodles. They **never** do homework on Friday.* (Allegedly.)
- With *be*, the adverb goes after: *He is **always** late.*
- △ *never* is already negative, so no *don't*: *I never eat fish* ✓, “*I don't never eat fish*” ×. Two negatives and the sentence gives up.

Watch out: traps for Chinese speakers

- △ **The missing -s.** feels complete, and learners write “*He walk to school.*” It is the single most common error in Chinese students’ English. *He walks.* Every time. The ego letter demands it.
- △ **Double marking.** “*Does she likes cats?*” puts -s on both verbs. *does* already ate it: *Does she like cats?*
- △ **Don't use do with be.** “*Do you are happy?*” mixes the two machines. *be* flips alone: *Are you happy?* (Topic 1’s machine still works.)
- △ **Facts and habits only.** *I am eating lunch* is happening now and belongs to a later topic. The present simple is for *I eat lunch at twelve* – the routine, not the moment.

Say it aloud

Describe your real routine. Boring is fine; boring is grammar gold.

- I wake up at seven. I never wake up happy.
- My father cooks dinner. My mother says he cooks. (Science has not confirmed this.)
- Does your best friend like cats? – Yes, they do. Everyone sensible does.

Check yourself

Answer first, then read the explanation.

1. *She* ____ (*watch*) *TV at night*. – **watches**. Third person, -ch ending, the -es dance.
2. ____ *he like cats?* – **Does**. The helper takes the -s; the main verb relaxes.
3. *They* ____ (*not eat*) *fish*. – **don't eat**. Helper plus not, base verb.
4. *He* ____ (*be*) *always late*. – **is**. With *be*, no helper, and the adverb follows *be*.
5. *Tā měi tiān zǒulù qù shàngxué.* – **He walks to school every day**. Third person, so the ego letter: walks.