

Present simple

English A2

What this topic teaches

You met the present simple in A1: *I walk, she walks, does he like cats?* This topic is the same tense with the lights turned up. You will learn three new rooms in a house you already own.

- Habits and facts you know. New: **timetables** and **stative verbs**.
- The present simple also talks about the future – but only the future printed on a timetable.
- Stative verbs are verbs of the mind and heart: *know, like, want, believe*. They refuse to wear -ing.
- Review anchor: *he/she/it* still takes the -s. The ego letter from A1 has not retired.

The forms in one minute

	I / you / we / they	he / she / it
statement	work	works
negative	don't work	doesn't work
question	Do you work?	Does she work?

- Spelling dances: *watch* → *watches*, *study* → *studies*, *go* → *goes*, and the rebel *have* → *has*.
- After *do/does/don't/doesn't*, the verb returns to base form: *Does she **like** tea?* The helper ate the -s. (A1 topic 7; it still eats well.)
- Adverbs of frequency sit before the main verb, after *be*: *I **often** walk. He **is** often late.*

Habits, facts and printed futures

Three jobs for one tense:

- **Habits and routines**: *I play football on Sundays. She never drinks coffee.*
- **Facts and eternal truths**: *Water boils at 100 degrees. Pandas eat bamboo.*
- **Timetables and schedules**: *The train leaves at nine. The film starts at seven thirty.* These are future events, but they are printed, official and unchangeable by you, so English treats them as facts. – *The train leaves at nine.* Your personal plans cannot use this – your plans are not a railway.

Stative verbs: the verbs that don't move

Some verbs describe states, not actions: **know, believe, understand, like, love, hate, want, need, prefer, mean**.

- They answer “what is true”, not “what is happening”. *I **know** the answer. She **wants** coffee.*
- △ They refuse the -ing form: “*I am knowing*” ×, “*I am wanting*” ×. Knowledge is not a sport; you cannot do it in the continuous.
- Yes, a famous restaurant says *I'm lovin' it*. Advertising breaks grammar for money; your exam does not pay you, so keep the rule.
- Collision: some verbs change meaning when they move. *I **think** it's a good idea* (my opinion, a state) vs *I'm **thinking** about the weekend* (my brain is working, an action). The same verb, two costumes.

Watch out: traps for Chinese speakers

- △ **Chinese verbs never change**, so the -s still goes missing: → *He **likes** cats*. By now your mouth should file the paperwork automatically; if not, say it aloud ten times.
- △ **Statives don't take -ing**. is impossible even in Chinese, and the same logic holds in English: *I understand ✓*, “*I am understanding*” ×.
- △ **Personal plans are not timetables**. “*I leave for Beijing tomorrow*” (present simple) works only if you are a train. Your plans use *going to* or the present continuous – topic 5 of this level.
- △ **Don't hire two helpers**. “*Does she likes?*” – one -s per sentence, and *does* already ate it.

Say it aloud

Describe your week like a timetable, then like a person.

- The school bus leaves at seven twenty. I leave my bed at seven nineteen. Both are fixed by nature.
- I always eat breakfast. I usually understand maths. I never understand my little brother.
- I like music, I love weekends, I want a longer holiday, and I believe the weekend is too short. All statives. All true.

Check yourself

Answer first, then read the explanation.

1. *The film _____ (start) at eight.* – **starts**. A printed schedule, so the present simple reports the future.
2. *I _____ (not understand) the question.* – **don't understand**. *understand* is stative: no -ing, no drama.
3. *She _____ (watch) TV on Fridays.* – **watches**. Third person, -ch dance.
4. *"I am loving this book."* – Strictly **I love this book**. *love* is a state; the billboard version is advertising, not grammar.
5. *Water _____ (boil) at 100 degrees.* – **boils**. An eternal truth; eternal truths take the present simple.