



When should I use the Present Simple?

Present Uses

1: We use the present simple when something is generally or always true.

- People need food.
- It snows in winter here.
- Two and two make four.

2: Similarly, we need to use this tense for a situation that we think is more or less permanent. (See the present continuous for temporary situations.)

- Where do you live?
- She works in a bank.
- I don't like mushrooms.

3: The next use is for habits or things that we do regularly. We often use adverbs of frequency (such as 'often', 'always' and 'sometimes') in this case, as well as expressions like 'every Sunday' or 'twice a month'. (See the present continuous for new, temporary or annoying habits).

- Do you smoke?
- I play tennis every Tuesday.
- I don't travel very often.

4: We can also use the present simple for short actions that are happening now. The actions are so short that they are finished almost as soon as you've said the sentence. This is often used with sports commentary, or in demonstrations.

- He takes the ball, he runs down the wing, and he scores!
- First I put some butter in the pan and turn on the cooker.

Future Uses

5: We use the present simple to talk about the future when we are discussing a timetable or a fixed plan. Usually, the timetable is fixed by an organisation, not by us.

- School begins at nine tomorrow.
- What time does the film start?
- The plane doesn't arrive at seven. It arrives at seven thirty.

6: We also use the present simple to talk about the future after words like 'when', 'until', 'after', 'before' and 'as soon as'. These are sometimes called subordinate clauses of time.

- I will call you when I have time. (Not '~~will have~~'.)
- I won't go out until it stops raining.
- I'm going to make dinner after I watch the news.

Conditional Uses

7: We use the present simple in the first and the zero conditionals. (See the conditionals section for more information.)

- If it rains, we won't come.
- If you heat water to 100 degrees, it boils.