

Unit 1

Present continuous (I am doing)

a Study this example situation:



Ann is in her car. She is on her way to work.

She is driving to work.

This means: she is driving now, at the time of speaking.

This is the *present continuous* tense:

I am (= I'm)		driving
he/she/(it) is (= he's etc.)		
we/they/you are (= we're etc.)		

We use the present continuous when we talk about something which is happening at the time of speaking:

- Please don't make so much noise. **I'm studying.** (*not* 'I study')
- 'Where is Margaret?' 'She's **having** a bath.' (*not* 'she has')
- Let's go out now. It **isn't raining** any more.
- (*at a party*) Hello, Ann. **Are you enjoying** the party? (*not* 'do you enjoy')

b We also use the present continuous when we talk about something which is happening around the time of speaking, but not necessarily exactly at the time of speaking. Study this example situation:

- Tom and Ann are talking and drinking in a cafe. Tom says: '**I'm reading** an interesting book at the moment. I'll lend it to you when I've finished it.'

Tom is not reading the book at the time of speaking. He means that he has begun the book and hasn't finished it yet. He is in the middle of reading it. Here are some more examples:

- Silvia **is learning** English at the moment. (*not* 'learns')
- Have you heard about Tom? He **is building** his own house. (*not* 'builds')