1. **Present continuous (I am doing) or present simple (I do)?**
2. Study this example and compare the example:

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| **Present continuous ( I am doing)**  *Use the present continuous to talk about something which is happening at or around the time of speaking*:  **I am doing**  past now future  \*The kettle is boiling . can you turn it off please?  \*What language are you speaking?  \*Where’s Tom? ‘He’s playing tennis.  \*(you find a stranger in your room) What are you doing here?  \*Silvia is in Britain for three months. She’s learning English.  *Use the present continuous for a temporary situation*:  \*I’m living with some friend until I can find a flat.  \*That machine isn’t working, it broke down this morning. | **Present simple (I do)**  *Use the present simple to talk about things in general or things which happen repeatedly:*  **I do**  Past now future  \*Water boils at 100 degrees Celsius.  \*Excuse me, do you speak English?  \*Tom plays tennis every Saturday.  \*What do you usually do at weekends?  \*What do you do? (=what’s your job?)  \*Most people learn to swim when they are children.  *Use the present simple for a*  *Permanent situation*:  \*My parents live in London .  \*That machine doesn’t work .  It hasn’t worked for years. |

1. Some verbs are used only in simple tenses. For example, you cannot say ‘I am knowing’. You can only say I know. Here is a list of verbs which are not normally used in continuous tenses (but there are exception):

**Want like belong know suppose remember**

**Need love see realize mean forget**

**Prefer hate hear believe understand seem**

Have (when the meaning is ‘possess’ )

Think (when the meaning is ‘believe’)::::

* Do you like London? (not ‘are you liking’)
* He doesn’t understand. (not he isn’t understanding)
* These shoes belong to me. (not ‘are belonging’)
* What do you think tom will do? (=what do you believe he will do?)

but: what are you thinking about? (=what is going on in your mind?)

1. **Present perfect ( I have done) or past simple (I did)?**
2. Do not use the present perfect (I have done) when you are talking about a finished time in the past (for example: yesterday, two years ago, in 1979, when I was a child). Use a past tense:

* Tom lost his key yesterday. (not ‘has lost’)
* Did you see the film on television last night? (not ‘have you seen’)
* Mr. Greaves retired from his job two years. (not ‘has retired’)
* I ate a lot of sweets when I was a child. (not ‘have eaten’)

Use a past tense to ask when something happened:

* What time did they arrive? (not ‘have they arrived’)
* When were you born? (not have you been born’)

Compare:

* Tom has lost his key. (present perfect)

Here we are not thinking of the past action; we are thinking of the present result of the action: he is without his key now.

* Tom lost his key yesterday. (past simple)

Here we are thinking of the action in the past. We don’t know whether Tom is without his key.

1. Now compare these sentences:

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| *Present perfect (****I have done****)*  **He has smoked** 20 cigarettes **today**.  **Today** is a period of the time which continues up to the present. It is not a finished time.  So we use the present perfect.  present    **Today (unfinished time)**  past  \*Tom hasn’t been ill this year.  \*Have you seen Ann this morning?  ( it is still morning)  \*Have you seen Ann recently?  \*We have been waiting for an hour. (We are still waiting.)  \*Ann has lived in London for six years.  (She still lives there.)  \*I have never played golf (in my life)  The present perfect always has a connection with the present. | *Past simple (* ***I did****)*  He smoked 20 cigarettes yesterday.  Yesterday is a finished time in the past.  So we use the past simple.  present      **yesterday (finished time)**  past  \*Tom wasn’t ill last year.  \*Did you see Ann this morning?  (It is now afternoon.)  \*Did you see Ann last week?  \*We waited (or were waiting) for an hour. (we are no longer waiting.)  \*Ann lived in Scotland for ten years.  \*I didn’t play golf when I was on holiday last summer.  The past simple tells us only about the past. |

1. **Present perfect continuous ( I have been doing)**

**or present perfect simple (I have done)**

1. Study these example situations:

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| \*Ann’s clothes are covered in paint.  \*She has been painting the ceiling.  *Has been painting is* ***the******present perfect continuous tense.***  *We are interested In the action.*  *It does not matter whether something has been finished or not.*  *In the example, the action has not been finished.*  *Here are some pairs of examples:*  \*Tom’s hands are very dirty.  He has been repairing the car.  \*You’ve been smoking too much recently.  You should smoke less. | \*The ceiling was white. Now it’s blue.  \*She has painted the ceiling.  *Has painting is* ***the present perfect simple tense.***  *This time, the important thing is that something has been finished.*  *We are interested in the result of the action.*  *Not in the action itself.*    \*The car is going again now.  Tom has repaired it.  \*Somebody has smoked all my cigarettes.  The packet is empty. |



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| *We use the continuous form to say how long something has been happening:*  \*Ann has been writing letters all day.  \*How long have you been reading that book?  \*Jim has been playing tennis since 2 o’clock. | *We use the simple form to say how much we have done, how many things we have done, or how many times we have done something:*  \*Ann has written ten letters today.  \*How many pages of that book have you read?  \*Jim has played tennis three times this week. |

1. Some verbs are not used in the continuous form, for example know.

You have to say **have known** (not have been knowing).