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Basics: Present Continuous vs. Present Simple

Easy | A1 | Elementary | Beginners | Present tense | Simple tense | Progressive tense | English Grammar Basics

1. An alien exchange student is writing an email to his parents on Mars about the strange habits of Earthlings.

Help him describe Earth accurately by selecting ALL the sentences that apply and correctly use the present tenses.

Select all that apply.

A) Humans usually sleep at night, but my human roommate is studying right now.
B) I am living in a university dorm this semester, but humans generally live in houses.
C) Water is boiling at 100 degrees Celsius on this planet.
D) I learn how to cook Italian pasta this week.

2. Complete the alien explorer's field report on human habits by choosing the correct verb for each gap.

Adult humans generally _____ at night, but the teenager in this house currently _____ at a glowing rectangle.

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

A) sleep
B) are sleeping
C) sleeps

Blank 2

A) is staring
B) stares
C) stare

3. You are a private detective people-watching at a local café, writing down clues about a suspicious character.

Read your observations below and select ALL the notes that apply and are grammatically correct.

Select all that apply.

A) The man in the corner is drinking a suspiciously large espresso.
B) He obviously wants to stay awake for a long time.
C) He is seeming very nervous about something.
D) The barista makes a cappuccino for him right now.

4. Help Detective Miller complete her surveillance log by choosing the correct verb form for each blank.

Every morning, the suspect _____ a large black coffee, but right now he _____ a bright pink smoothie.

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

A) drinks
B) is drinking
C) drink

Blank 2

A) is sipping
B) sips
C) sip

5. You are venting to your best friend about your slightly annoying (but lovable) roommate.

Select ALL the complaints that apply and are grammatically correct.

Select all that apply.

A) He usually forgets to take out the recycling on Tuesdays.
B) He is constantly singing loud opera in the shower at 2 AM!
C) He is completely ignoring the chore chart every single week.
D) Right now, he plays his electric guitar in the living room.

6. Choose the correct verb forms to finish this college student's desperate text message to her mom.

My roommate usually _____ quietly in the library, but this week she _____ the bagpipes in our dorm room!

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

A) studies
B) is studying
C) study

Blank 2

A) is practicing
B) practices
C) practice

7. Choose the correct phrase to complete the panicked text message.

I usually clean the kitchen on Sundays, but right now the blender _____ green smoothie all over the ceiling!

Select one.

A) sprays
B) is spraying
C) spray
D) are spraying

8. Complete the barista's mental notes about her regular customers.

Mr. Henderson usually _____ a black coffee, but today he _____ a brightly colored matcha latte.

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

A) order
B) orders
C) is ordering

Blank 2

A) drinks
B) drink
C) is drinking

9. You are excitedly finalizing your summer vacation plans and messaging your travel buddy.

Select ALL the sentences that apply and correctly express your schedule and arrangements.

Select all that apply.

A) Our train leaves at 7:30 AM tomorrow morning.
B) We are staying at a really nice hotel next to the beach next week.
C) The local museum is opening at 9:00 AM every single day.
D) I pack my suitcase right now so I don't forget my swimsuit!

10. Help the café manager complete the incident report.

Normally, Dave makes excellent cappuccinos, but this week he _____ the new, highly explosive espresso machine.

Select one.

- **A)** operates
- **B)** is operating
- **C)** operate
- **D)** operating

11. Complete the frustrated employee's IT support ticket.

The office printer always _____ when I print double-sided, so currently I _____ all my reports by hand. Please help!

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

- **A)** jams
- **B)** is jamming
- **C)** jam

Blank 2

- **A)** am writing
- **B)** write
- **C)** writes

12. Complete the undercover alien's logbook entry.

I am observing the humans closely, but I still _____ why they laugh when they are miserable.

Select one.

- **A)** am not understanding
- **B)** don't understand
- **C)** doesn't understand
- **D)** not understand

13. Fill in the pet owner's amusing social media post about their cat's sudden burst of energy.

My cat Barnaby usually _____ on my computer keyboard, but right now he _____ an invisible bug around the living room.

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

- **A)** sleeps
- **B)** is sleeping
- **C)** sleep

Blank 2

- **A)** is chasing
- **B)** chases
- **C)** chase

14. Help the exhausted college student text their mom about their week.

I normally _____ you on Sunday evenings, but this week I _____ for my scary biology midterm!

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

- **A)** call
- **B)** am calling
- **C)** calls

Blank 2

- **A)** am studying
- **B)** study
- **C)** studies

15. Help the nature documentary narrator finish the script.

Behold the majestic house cat. It usually patrols the garden for fierce bugs, but currently, it _____ on a fresh pile of laundry.

Select one.

A) sleeps
B) is sleeping
C) sleep
D) are sleeping