THE Present Simple TENSE

What Is The Present Simple?

The present simple tense is the most used tense in English. We use the present simple for habits (things we do again and again) and facts (things that are true), like in these examples:

"I get up at 7am"   "I read every night"   "Water boils at 100°C"   "I like chips"

Singular and Plural Nouns

Singular and plural nouns can change the verb in some present simple sentences, so let's make sure we understand them.

A singular noun is one person, place, thing, or idea. For example, *a student*, *a teacher*, *a dog*.

A plural noun is two or more people, places, things, or ideas. For example, *the students*, *teachers*, *dogs*.

Making the Present Simple

The most important part of the present simple is the main verb. It must always be a base verb (sometimes we call this verb 1). Let's look at how to make a sentence.

Positive Sentence

Subject	+	verb	(+ object).
I/You/We/They		like	chips.
He/She/It		watches	TV.
Rhys		studies	Chinese.
The students		finish	school.

To make a positive sentence, we need a subject (the person or thing that does the verb), a verb, and an object (the person or thing that receives the verb).

If the subject is he, she, it, or a singular noun, you will need to change the verb in a positive sentence. For example, *he* changes *watch* to *watches*. *Rhys* changes *study* to *studies*. We will look at this in more detail later on.

Negative Sentence

Subject +	don't / doesn't +	verb	(+ object).
I/You/We/They	don't	like	chips.
He/She/It	doesn't	watch	TV.
Rhys	doesn't	study	Chinese.
The students	don't	finish	school.

To make a negative sentence, we need to add *do not* or *does not* after the subject. Usually, we'll shorten these to *don't* and *doesn't*. We use *don't* for I, you, we, they, and plural nouns. We use *doesn't* for he, she, it, and singular nouns.

Closed Question

Do / Does +	subject +	verb	(+ object)?
Do	I/you/we/they	like	chips?
Does	he/she/it	watch	TV?
Does	Rhys	study	Chinese?
Do	the students	finish	school?

To make a closed question, we can just make a positive sentence and put *do* or *does* at the start. *Do* for I, you, we, they, and plural nouns. *Does* for he, she, it, and singular nouns. Don't forget to add a question mark at the end too!

To answer a closed question, we say *yes* or *no*. It's also important to use to use the helping verb (do/does) in your answer:

| Yes, I do. / No, I don't. | Yes, he does. / No, he doesn't. |

Open Question

Question word	do / does	+ subject	+ verb	(+ object)?
Why	do	I/you/we/they	like	chips?
Where	does	he/she/it	watch	TV?
How	does	Rhys	study	Chinese?
When	do	the students	finish	school?

To make an open question, we just add a question word to the start of a closed question. We can answer a closed question with a positive sentence.

Changing Verbs

He, she, it, and singular nouns can change the main verb. There are three ways to change the verb, and it depends on the last one or two letters. There is one exception, *have*.

Have changes to *has*.

have → has
That man has a nice car. She has a cute cat.

If the verb ends in *s*, *sh*, *ch*, *x*, or *o*, add *es*.

s, sh, ch, x, o + es
She goes to work at 9am. The dog chases the postman.

If the verb ends in *y*, you need to look at the letter before *y*. If it is a consonant (bcdfghijklmnpqrstvwxyz), then take away the *y* and add *ies*.

consonant + y y + ies
He worries about money. The bird flies around here.

Finally, for all other verbs, just add *s*.

everything else + s
He plays football. John bakes bread.

Test Your Knowledge

Now you know how to make the present simple, it's time to test what you have learned. Fill in the gaps using the words in brackets. Some words might need to be changed; others don't need to be changed.

1. He _____ for a bank. (work)

2. We _____ coffee in the morning. (not drink)

3. _____ she _____ to the gym regularly? (go)

4. When _____ your brother _____ dinner? (cook)

5. They _____ football on Wednesdays. (play)

6. What time _____ the bus _____? (arrive)

7. My friend _____ at a book shop. (work)

8. _____ you _____ any pets? (have)

Answers:

1. works 2. don't drink 3. Does, go 4. does, cook 5. play 6. does, arrive 7. works 8. Do, have