

Desmond & Darlene's Guide To English Grammar

Present Continuous

Note: the gerund is the -ing verb form (eating, sleeping etc)

I **am** + gerund

we/you/they **are** + gerund

he/she/it/ **is** + gerund

1. Actions happening now

Darlene *is taking* a shower.

This means Darlene *is taking* a shower right now, the action is not finished.

Desmond *is banging* on the bathroom door, right now, very hard.

So two things *are happening* right now.

Darlene *is taking* a very long shower and Desmond *is banging* on the door and *shouting*, "How much longer are you going to be in there?"

Actually that's three things.

2. Actions not completed

An incomplete action could be happening now:

Darlene *is taking* a shower and *singing*, "I'm *singing* in the rain, just *singing* in the rain, what a glorious feeling I'm happy again," and so on.

Desmond *is kicking* the door and *screaming*, "I hate that song, I hate it, I hate it, I really hate it. Let me in!"

Or it could be something someone *is doing* regularly and is incomplete:

Desmond *is doing* a course. *He's doing* a motorcycle maintenance course. Desmond *is not actually doing* the course right now. No, *he's trying* to get into the bathroom. His class starts at eight in the morning and he doesn't want to be late.

Every Friday morning Desmond goes to a local college and takes his motorcycle apart and then puts it back together again. It's a strange activity and on Fridays his students at the Queen Victoria School Of English usually complain that he smells of oil.

3. Actions happening in the present time period (today, this week etc.)

Desmond is always late on Friday. So at 8.55am (classes start at 9pm) the headmaster asks Darlene:

"Is Desmond *coming* today?"

Darlene replies:

"Yes, *he's coming*, but he'll be late and smell of oil."

The headmaster asks:

"Why is he always late on a Friday?"

Darlene sighs. She's explained this a thousand times before:

"*He's learning* how to take his motorcycle apart and put it back together again."

4. **Changes happening in the world now**

Usually when Darlene tells him that Desmond will be late the headmaster shakes his head and says:

"Times *are changing*. Standards *are falling*. In my day teachers were never late and they never took their motorcycles apart."

Exercises

Use the verb in the present continuous form:

eg: Desmond has just finished his course and he *is driving* (drive) to work on his motorbike.

1. Desmond's students _____ (wait) for him to arrive. They _____ (make) a lot of noise and _____ (throw) things at each other.
2. The headmaster _____ (stand) in the school entrance _____ (wait) for Desmond.
3. He _____ (look) at his watch and _____ (shake) his head.
4. Desmond arrives 15 minutes late. "I suppose your watch _____ (not/work)?" the headmaster says.
5. "I'm most terribly sorry," Desmond says, "I _____ (run) a little late aren't I?"
6. "You're late, you smell of motorbike oil and you _____ (wear) goggles," the headmaster says, "you _____ (not/go) into the classroom like that."
7. "Absolutely not," Desmond replies, "look, I _____ (take off) my goggles. I am an English teacher and an English teacher will never wear goggles in the classroom."
8. The headmaster looks at Desmond quizzically. He _____ (think), "Desmond is completely insane, he's a crazy English teacher, standards _____ (fall), in my day teachers were never insane."
9. He asks, "_____ you _____ (see) a therapist?"
10. "_____ I _____ (see) a therapist?" Desmond replies indignantly, "what _____ you _____ (imply)? Do you think I am mad? Do you believe a lunatic could teach English grammar?"

Desmond grins, looks at his oil-stained hands and says, "I really must be going, I have a class to teach."

Answers

1. are waiting, are making, throwing
2. is standing, waiting
3. is looking, shaking
4. isn't working
5. am running
6. are wearing, are not going
7. am taking off
8. is thinking, are falling
9. *are you seeing*
10. *am I seeing, are you implying*