

Reference 13.1: The Present-Progressive Tense

What does the Present-Progressive Tense describe?

- The Present-Progressive Tense describes what is happening now.
- The Present Tense describes what happens in general.
- The Immediate Future Tense describes what is going to happen.

Like the Immediate Future Tense, the Present-Progressive Tense is a compound tense, which means that it requires (at least) two different types of verbs. In this case, the Present Progressive uses an auxiliary (helping) verb and a Present Participle (gerund).

The auxiliary verb that we use describe what is happening now is “estar”. We use “estar” instead of “ser” because what is happening now is conditional.

Make sure you know how to conjugate the verb “estar” in the Present Tense to properly utilize the Present Progressive Tense.

estar- estoy, estás, está estamos, estáis, están.

Note: If you are bad with the accent marks, you are going to want to make sure that you know where to place them, since we will soon be using Demonstrative Adjectives, which look very similar to these conjugations.

The Present Participle (sometimes called a gerund) is a verb that is **formed**. Participles are not conjugated, which means they always look the same and they do not take a subject pronoun. Instead, the auxiliary verb (estar) is the verb that takes a subject pronoun.

How to form Present Participles (Gerunds)

AR Verbs:	Drop the “ar” ending and add: “ANDO”.	Example: hablando
ER Verbs:	Drop the “er” ending and add: “IENDO”.	Example: comiendo
IR Verbs:	Drop the “ir” ending and add: “IENDO”.	Example: viviendo
Double-Vowels:	Drop the AR, ER or IR and add “YENDO”.	Example: leyendo

Note: Double-Vowels simply refer to if there are two vowels next to each other in the infinitive such as: “caer”, “creer”, “incluir”, “leer”, “traer”, etc.

Note: Double-Vowels only work with ER and IR verbs.

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Stem-Changes: Any infinitive that ends in “IR” that contains a Stem-Change in the Present Tense will have a special Stem-Change in the Present-Progressive Tense.

- IRs that are O to UE in the Present Tense → become O to U as the Present Participle
 - Duermo (Present Tense) → durmiendo (Present Participle)
- IRs that are E to IE, or E to I in the Present Tense → become E to I in the Present Progressive Tense
 - Miento. (Present Tense) → mintiendo
 - Dices. (Present Tense) → diciendo

Other Examples:

- advertir- to alert advirtiendo
- competir- to compete compitiendo
- convertir- to convert convirtiendo
- decir- to say, to tell diciendo
- mentir- to lie, to deceive mintiendo
- morir- to die muriendo
- pedir- to ask for, to request pidiendo
- repetir- to repeat repitiendo
- venir- to come viniendo

Participle Rule: Participles cannot stand alone. In Spanish, they must have an auxiliary verb before them. Many English speakers equivocate the Present Participles in Spanish to the “ing” suffix in English. This is true after the use of an auxiliary verb; however, if an English sentence has an “ing” word that stands alone, the equivalent is simply an infinitive.

Example:

- “Swimming is fun.”
- Nadar es divertido.
 - Note: There is no auxiliary (helping) verb in front of the word “swimming”.
 - Note: It is actually correct English to say, “To swim is fun.”

Example:

- “I never eat before swimming.”
- “Yo nunca como antes de nadar.”
 - Note: There is no auxiliary (helping) verb in front of the word “swimming”.

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- Note: The phrase “antes de” means before, which is a preposition. Any time there is a verb that follows a preposition; it must be an infinitive anyways.

Correct Tense:

When English speakers learn the Present-Progressive Tense, they generally find it to be quite easy to form. There is not much to forming the participles and at this point, the auxiliary verb “estar” should be familiar to you. However, English speakers do tend to use their own language incorrectly when it comes to expressing tenses. It is important to remember that the Present-Progressive Tense describes what is happening now.

- I’m eating at 6 o’clock with my friends.
 - This should not be formed with the Present-Progressive. It is describing something that is going to take place in the Immediate Future. Therefore, to express this in Spanish, you must say.
 - “Voy a comer a las seis con mis amigos.”
 - I am going to eat with my friends at six o’clock.
- I’m traveling to Las Vegas this weekend.
 - Again, this is the future; therefore, the Immediate or Regular Future Tense should be used.
 - Voy a viajar a Las Vegas este fin de semana.
 - I am going to travel to Las Vegas this weekend.
- Every day I’m practicing my vocabulary.
 - This describes something that happens in general; therefore, the Present Tense should be used.
 - Cada día yo practico mi vocabulario.
 - Every day I practice my vocabulary.

IR- to go

Technically, there is a way to form the Present-Progressive with the verb “ir”, which means “to go”. The participle of “ir” is actually the only irregular participle and it is “yendo”. However, the word “going” is simply a conjugated form of “ir” itself. The only time the verb “ir” takes the Present Progressive Tense is with Idiomatic Expressions that go with the verb “ir”.

Example: to shop- ir de compras

- I’m shopping right now.
 - Estoy yendo de compras.
- I’m going to sing tonight.
 - Voy a cantar esta noche.
 - Even though the second example says “I’m going”, the verb “ir” is special and does not take the Present-Progressive when it means “go” or “going”.