

TEACHERS CORNER – AUGUST 2015

PROGRESSIVE FORM

The progressive is a useful but sometimes tricky verb form for students. This verb form allows English speakers to express actions in relation to time without reference to a specific time. For example, we can use the progressive to denote an action that is occurring now or will occur in the near future. The progressive can also be used to describe actions that occur over a long period of time, in the present, past, or future. This month we'll examine how the progressive tense can be used with a variety of activities. These activities can help learners better understand how this flexible and functional verb form can be used to provide richer detail in their speaking and writing.

Present Progressive is used to describe an action in progress at the moment of speaking.

Time expressions: now, right now, at the moment.

Ex. Ellen is speaking on the phone right now.

1. Present progressive is used to describe a temporary action in progress or an action that is changing. Time expressions: these days, this month, this week, this year, etc.
Ex. This semester I am taking Math 101.
2. Present progressive is used with another present progressive to describe two actions in progress happening at the same time in the present.
3. Present progressive is used with temporary situations.
Ex. I am staying home today because I am sick.
4. Present progressive is used to express trends.
Ex. More students are studying online.
Ex. I am reading a book, and my husband is watching TV.
5. Stative or non-action verbs often are not used in present progressive. Simple present is used instead.
Ex. I ~~am owning~~ a red car. I own a red car.

Past Progressive is used to describe an action in progress happening at a specific time in the past.

Ex. I was cooking dinner at 7pm last night.

1. Past progressive is used with simple past to describe an action in progress interrupted by another action in the past.
Ex. I was doing my homework when somebody knocked on the door.
2. Past progressive is used with another past progressive to describe two actions in progress happening at the same time in the past.
Ex. While I was reading a book, my husband was watching TV last night.
3. Stative or non-action verbs often are not used in past progressive. Simple past is used instead.
Ex. I ~~was understating~~ my teacher's explanation in class yesterday. I understood my teacher's explanation in class yesterday.

Future Progressive is used to describe an action in progress at a specific time in the future.

Ex. Tonight at 8pm, I will be reading my book.

1. Future progressive is used to describe an action in progress interrupted by another shorter action in the future.
Ex. I will be waiting for you at the airport when you arrive.
2. Future progressive is used with another future progressive to describe two actions in progress happening at the same time in the future.

Ex. I will be studying tonight, and you will be making dinner for the family.

3. Stative or non-action verbs often are not used in future progressive. Future simple is used instead.

Ex. I will ~~be being~~ at home tomorrow night. I will be at home tomorrow night.