

## Progressive Tense

### APSU Writing Center Handout

Referring to actions that are ongoing or continuous at the time being discussed.

Use a progressive form of the verb (-ing) when an action is in progress at a particular moment.

#### Present Progressive

Describes what is happening right now.

**Form:** am, are, or is and a verb ending in -ing.

- **Example:** I am smiling
- **Example:** They are smiling.

#### Past Progressive

Describes an action that was in progress at a specific moment in the past.

**Form:** was or were and a verb ending in -ing.

- **Example:** He was smiling.
- **Example:** They were smiling.

#### Future Progressive

Describes an action that will be in progress at a future moment.

**Form:** will be and a verb ending in -ing.

- **Example:** They will be smiling.

#### Common Mistakes

## Using Simple Present Instead of Present Progressive

Use the present progressive when something is happening right now.

- **Error:** I can't talk to you right now. I study for my exams.
- **Correction:** I can't talk to you right now. I am studying for my exams.

## Using Progressive Tense with Steady-State Verbs

Steady-state verbs express conditions, not actions. These verbs describe states that do not change moment to moment, so they cannot be used in the progressive tense.

- **Error:** Juan is belonging to the student union.
- **Correction:** Juan belongs to the student union.

## Categories of steady-state verbs:

### Mental Activity

- **Examples:** believe, doubt, forget, imagine, know, mean

### Emotional Condition

- **Examples:** appreciate, care, dislike, envy, fear, hate, like, love, need, prefer, want

### Possession

- **Examples:** belong, consist of, contain, own, possess