

Present Progressive

The present progressive is formed by combining the verb “to be” with the present participle. (The present participle is merely the “-ing” form of a verb.)

I am studying.

I am studying with María.

In English, present progressive can be used to describe what is happening now, or what will happen in the future.

I am studying now.

I am studying with María tonight.

In Spanish, the present progressive is only used to describe an action that is in the process of taking place. It is not used for future actions.

I am studying now.

(use present progressive)

I am studying with María tonight.

(do not use present progressive)

To form the present progressive in Spanish, combine a form of “estar” with the present participle.

Estoy hablando I am speaking.

Juan está comiendo John is eating.

María está escribiendo una carta Mary is writing a letter.

In order to form the present progressive, you must know how to conjugate the verb *estar*, and how to form the present participle. You already know how to conjugate the verb *estar*:

estar

estoy

estás

está

estamos

estáis

están

To form the present participle of regular -ar verbs, add -ando to the stem of the verb.

hablar: **hablando**

(hablar - ar + ando)

trabajar: **trabajando**

(trabajar - ar + ando)

estudiar: **estudiando**

(estudiar - ar + ando)

To form the present participle of regular -er and -ir verbs, add -iendo to the stem of the verb.

comer: **comiendo**
(comer - er + iendo)

hacer: **haciendo**
(hacer - er + iendo)

vivir: **viviendo**
(vivir - ir + iendo)

escribir: **escribiendo**
(escribir - ir + iendo)

To form the present participle of -ir stem changing verbs, change e:i and o:u in the stem, and then add -iendo to the stem of the verb.

servir: **sirviendo**
pedir: **pidiendo**
decir: **diciendo**

dormir: **durmiendo**
morir: **muriendo**

Although it is not an -ir stem changing verb, poder also changes o:u in the stem:

poder: **pudiendo**

Sometimes when forming the present participle it is necessary to change the spelling of a word so that it agrees with the way it is pronounced. We call this an "orthographic" change. Here are some common examples:

caer cayendo
creer creyendo
huir..... huyendo
ir..... yendo
influir..... influyendo
oír..... oyendo
traer..... trayendo
leer leyendo
seguir..... siguiendo

The following examples illustrate the rules for forming the present participle.

hablar hablando (-ar)
comer comiendo (-er)
vivir viviendo (-ir)
decir diciendo (e:i)
dormir..... durmiendo (o:u)
leer leyendo (orthographic)
seguir..... siguiendo (orthographic)

To form the present progressive, simply conjugate the verb *estar* to agree with the subject of the sentence, and follow it with the present participle.

Juan **está comiendo** pan.
John is eating bread.

María y Carmen **están hablando** con nosotros.
Mary and Carmen are speaking with us.

Remember, only use the present progressive for actions that are “in progress.” Compare the uses of the present indicative with the uses of the present progressive.

Estudio español. (Present Indicative)

I study Spanish.
I am studying Spanish (these days).
I do study Spanish.

Estoy estudiando español. (Present Progressive)

I am studying (right now, at this moment) Spanish.
It is important to remember that you would never use the present progressive to say something like “We are going to Spain this summer.” Use present progressive only for actions that are “in progress.”

Let’s add two more verb flashcards: one for present progressive and one for practice in forming the present participle:

Verb Flashcards

20. Present Progressive

estar + present participle

I am speaking (right now, at this moment)

Never use present progressive for something that will occur in the future.

21. Present Participle (-ando, -iendo, yendo)

hablar - hablando (-ar)
comer - comiendo (-er)
vivir - viviendo (-ir)
decir - diciendo (e:i)
dormir - durmiendo (o:u)
leer - leyendo (orthographic)
seguir: siguiendo (orthographic)