

## The Progressive Tenses

Resource: *A Commonsense Guide to Grammar and Usage, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition.* (p 348-356).

### Progressive tense

- Used to refer to actions that are ongoing/continuous at the time of the sentence.
- If an action is in progress at some moment of time, use a progressive (-ing) form of the verb.
- There are three forms of progressive verbs:
  1. **Present progressive:** uses the helping verb *be* in one of its three past tense forms (*am, are, is*).
    - Example: I am smiling. They are smiling. She is smiling.
    - Used to talk about what is happening at the exact present moment of time.
  2. **Past progressive:** uses the helping verb *be* in one of its two past tense forms (*was, were*).
    - Example: He was smiling. They were smiling.
    - Used to describe an action that was in progress at some past moment of time.
  3. **Future progressive:** uses *will* with the helping verb *be*.
    - Example: They will be smiling.
    - Used to describe an action that will be in progress at some future point.

### Common mistakes:

- Writer incorrectly uses the present tense instead of the present progressive tense.
  - Example:
    - 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 the progressive tense with steady-state verbs.
  - **Steady-State Verb:** verbs that refer to unchanging, steady-state conditions that cannot form the progressive tense. They fall under three broad categories:
    1. Mental activity: *believe, doubt, forget, imagine, know, mean*
    2. Emotional condition: *appreciate, care, dislike, envy, fear, hate, like, love, need, prefer, want*
    3. Possession: *belong, consist of, contain, own, possess*
  - Example:
    - Error: Juan is belonging to the student union.
    - Correction: Juan belongs to the student union.