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Open

English Grammar

Understanding the Basics

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Unit 19

Present tenses (I am doing / I do) for the future

A Present continuous (I am doing) with a future meaning



This is Ben's diary for next week.

He **is playing** tennis on Monday afternoon.
He **is going** to the dentist on Tuesday morning.
He **is having** dinner with Kate on Friday.

In all these examples, Ben has already decided and arranged to do these things.

'I'm doing' something (tomorrow) = I have already decided and arranged to do it:

- A: What **are you doing** on Saturday evening? (not What do you do)
- B: I'm **going** to the theatre. (not I go)
- A: What time **is** Katherine **arriving** tomorrow?
- B: Half past ten. I'm **meeting** her at the station.
- I'm **not working** tomorrow, so we can go out somewhere.
- Steve **isn't playing** football next Saturday. He's hurt his leg.

'I'm going to (do)' is also possible in these sentences:

- What **are you going to do** on Saturday evening?

But the present continuous is more natural when we talk about arrangements. See Unit 20B.

Do not use **will** to talk about what you have arranged to do:

- What **are you doing** this evening? (not What will you do)
- Alex **is getting** married next month. (not will get)

You can also use the present continuous for an action *just before you begin to do it*. This happens especially with verbs of movement (go/come/leave etc.):

- I'm tired. I'm **going** to bed now. Goodnight. (not I go to bed now)
- 'Jess, are you ready yet?' 'Yes, I'm **coming**.' (not I come)

B Present simple (I do) with a future meaning

We use the present simple when we talk about timetables, programmes etc. (for public transport, cinemas etc.):

- My train **leaves** at 11.30, so I need to be at the station by 11.15.
- What time **does** the film **start** this evening?
- It's Wednesday tomorrow. / Tomorrow is Wednesday.

You can use the present simple to talk about people if their plans are fixed like a timetable:

- I **start** my new job on Monday.
- What time **do you finish** work tomorrow?

But the continuous is more usual for personal arrangements:

- What time **are you meeting** Ann tomorrow? (not do you meet)

Compare:

Present continuous

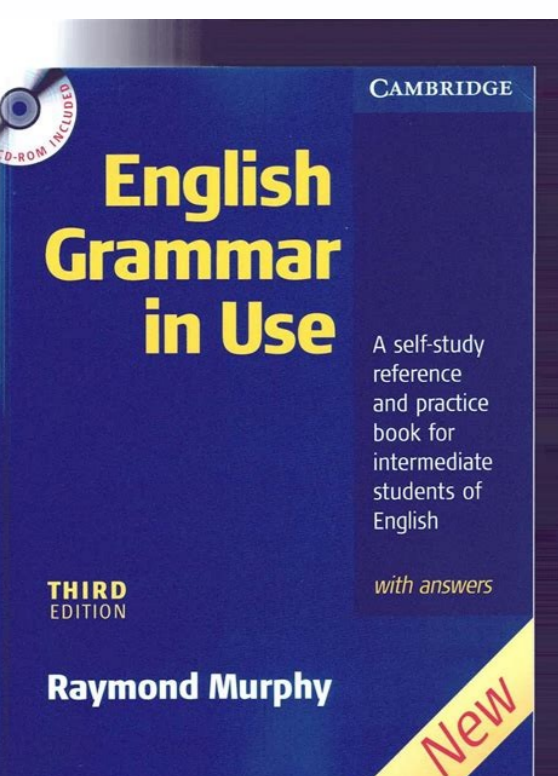
- What time **are you arriving**?
- I'm **going** to the cinema this evening.

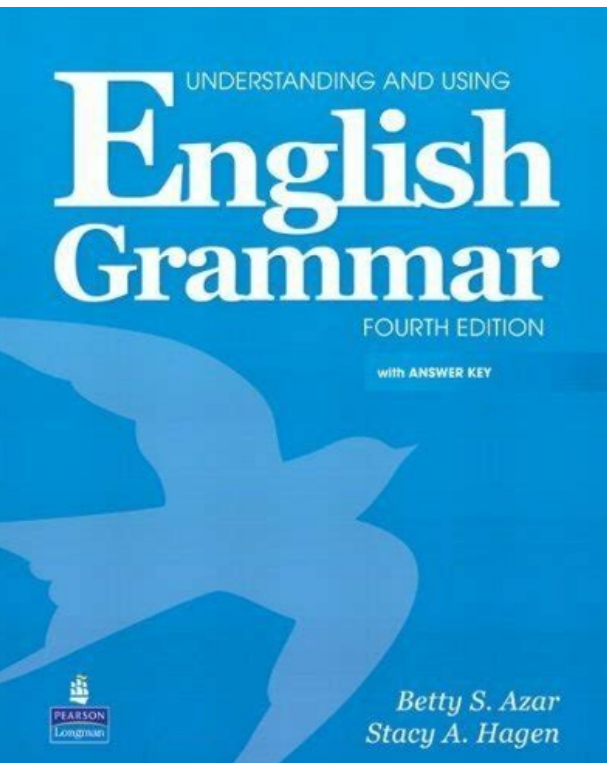
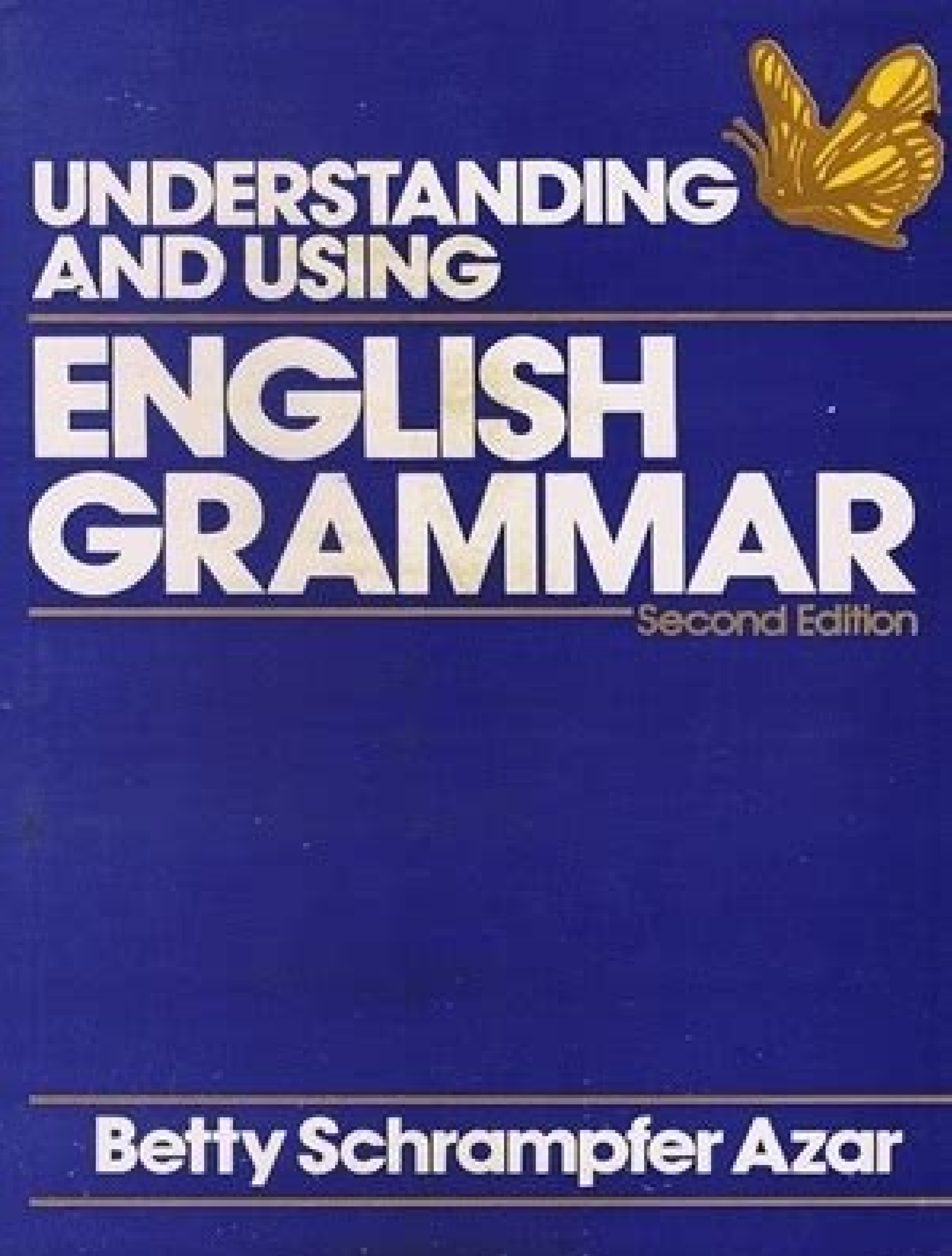
Present simple

- What time **does the train arrive**?
- The film starts** at 8.15 (this evening).

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I'm going to → Units 20, 23 Will → Units 21–22 Present simple after when/if etc. → Unit 25





In some cases, you can use several tenses in a single prayer, for example, if you said, "I worked there for six years, but now I will work somewhere else". In that prayer, you are using both past simple time and future continuous time. But in some cases, you want to stick with just one time. Each time can take four forms: the simple, the continuous, the perfect and the perfect continuous. If you say, "I'd only traveled a mile", you're using perfect past time.

Open our practice workbook. In cell D2, type today's date and press Enter. Click cell D2 and verify that it is using a Date number format. Try changing it to a different date format (for example, Long Date). In cell D2, use the Format Cells dialog box to choose the 14-Mar-12 date format. English and maths resources created to keep learners engaged whilst studying at home. From fully comprehensive home learning packs created to help English students continue with their studies to maths homework booklets complete with ...

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