

English Grammar Rules

Present Simple Tense

The present simple tense in English is used to describe an action that is regular, true or normal.

We use the present tense:

1. For repeated or regular actions in the present time period.

- I **take** the train to the office.
- The train to Berlin **leaves** every hour.
- John **sleeps** eight hours every night during the week.

2. For facts.

- The President of The USA **lives** in The White House.
- A dog **has** four legs.
- We **come** from Switzerland.

3. For habits.

- I **get up** early every day.
- Carol **brushes** her teeth twice a day.
- They **travel** to their country house every weekend.

4. For things that are always / generally true.

- It **rains** a lot in winter.
- The Queen of England **lives** in Buckingham Palace.
- They **speak** English at work.

Verb Conjugation & Spelling

We form the present tense using the base form of the infinitive (without the TO).

In general, in the third person we add 'S' in the third person.

Subject	Verb	The Rest of the sentence
I / you / we / they	speak / learn	English at home
he / she / it	speaks / learns	English at home

The spelling for the verb in the third person differs depending on the ending of that verb:

1. For verbs that end in **-O, -CH, -SH, -SS, -X, or -Z** we add **-ES** in the third person.

- go – goes
- catch – catches
- wash – washes
- kiss – kisses
- fix – fixes
- buzz – buzzes

2. For verbs that end in a **consonant + Y**, we remove the **Y** and add **-IES**.

- marry – marries
- study – studies
- carry – carries
- worry – worries

NOTE: For verbs that end in a **vowel + Y**, we just add **-S**.

- play – plays
- enjoy – enjoys
- say – says

Negative Sentences in the Simple Present Tense

To make a negative sentence in English we normally use Don't or Doesn't with all verbs EXCEPT **To Be** and **Modal verbs** (can, might, should etc.).

- Affirmative: You speak French.
Negative: You **don't** speak French.

You will see that we add **don't** between the subject and the verb. We use **Don't** when the subject is **I, you, we** or **they**.

- Affirmative: He speaks German.
Negative: He **doesn't** speak German.

When the subject is **he, she** or **it**, we add **doesn't** between the subject and the verb to make a negative sentence. Notice that the letter **S** at the end of the verb in the affirmative sentence (because it is in third person) disappears in the negative sentence. We will see the reason why below.

Negative Contractions

Don't = Do not

Doesn't = Does not

I **don't** like meat = I **do not** like meat.

There is no difference in meaning though we normally use contractions in spoken English.

Word Order of Negative Sentences

The following is the word order to construct a basic negative sentence in English in the Present Tense using **Don't** or **Doesn't**.

Subject	don't/doesn't	Verb*	The Rest of the sentence
I / you / we / they	don't	have / buy	cereal for breakfast
he / she / it	doesn't	eat / like etc.	

* Verb: The verb that goes here is the base form of the infinitive = The infinitive without TO before the verb. Instead of the infinitive **To have** it is just the **have** part.

Remember that the infinitive is the verb before it is conjugated (changed) and it begins with **TO**. For example: to have, to eat, to go, to live, to speak etc.

Examples of Negative Sentences with Don't and Doesn't:

- You **don't** speak Arabic.
- John **doesn't** speak Italian.
- We **don't** have time for a rest.
- It **doesn't** move.
- They **don't** want to go to the party.
- She **doesn't** like fish.