

Title:

Spanish Grammar Lesson on the Present Progressive Tense

Word Count:

553

Summary:

The progressive tense is used to describe actions that are in progress at a specific moment in time (the present). In English, it is the auxiliary verb "to be" and the present participle. In layperson terms, the "present participle" means verbs with "ing" attached to the end of the verb.

Keywords:

Learning Spanish Like Crazy

Article Body:

The Present Progressive Tense

The progressive tense is used to describe actions that are in progress at a specific moment in time (the present). In English, it is the auxiliary verb "to be" and the present participle. In layperson terms, the "present participle" means verbs with "ing" attached to the end of the verb.

The present tense is used much more frequently in English than it is used in Spanish. As in Spanish, we use it to talk about actions that are in progress "now" or "right now." But in English, we also use the present progressive tense to describe habitual actions or to speak in general. For example:

I am living in the suburbs.

I am working in the post office.

I am taking Spanish lessons.

In Spanish, the present tense is used to emphasize that an action is taking

place now. But many Spanish grammar books do not indicate that there is another use for the present progressive tense. And that the present progressive tense can be used to stress that an action is continuous.

I learned this one from trial and error. As embarrassing as it is to admit, a five year old little girl corrected my Spanish grammar. That's how I found out.

The first time it happened it happened with an adult. I was trying to tell an adult that I am learning Spanish. Since the Spanish grammar books taught me that the Spanish present progressive tense is only used to describe actions that are in progress "right now," I did not use the present progressive tense to say that "I am learning Spanish." Because I was not learning Spanish at that specific moment. At that very moment, I was trying to talk to her in Spanish. So I said "Aprendo español." She politely corrected me and said "se dice estoy aprendiendo español".

At the time, I thought that maybe she was wrong and that my textbook was right. So I tried telling my next door neighbor's five year old that "Yo aprendo español" who proudly corrected my Spanish. She told me: you're supposed to say "yo estoy aprendiendo español."

### Forming the Present Progressive Tense

In Spanish, we form the present progressive tense by conjugating the verb "estar" with the present participle. You form regular "ar" present participles by dropping the "ar" and adding "ando." And you form regular "er" present participles by dropping the "er" and adding "iendo"

Let's try it.

My grandmother is eating pork chops.

Mi abuelita está comiendo chuletas de cerdo.

The uncle is working.

El tío está trabajando.

The father-in-law is dancing.

El suegro está bailando.

The stepmother is cooking the lobster.

La madrastra está cocinando la langosta.

The grandson is doing nothing.

El nieto no está haciendo nada.

You are washing the windows.

Tú estás limpiando las ventanas.

Now let's try a few on your own. The answers appear at the bottom.

The nephew is selling cars.

The daughter-in-law is writing a letter.

The sister-in-law is receiving a lot of gifts.

The grandchildren are playing.

The cousin is buying a tie.

Answers:

El sobrino está vendiendo carros.

La nuera está escribiendo una carta.

La cuñada está recibiendo muchos regalos.

Los nietos están jugando.

El primo está comprando una corbata.