

The Present Tense

Basic Idea:	Views the action as an unfolding event, “from inside”
Indicative Mood:	Usually present time
Non-Indicative Moods:	No time significance, except in temporal participles

Regular Uses

Short duration	Instantaneous (Aoristic, Punctiliar)	“am/are doing”	Present time. Indicates that an action is <i>being completed at the moment</i> of speaking. No emphasis on the ongoing nature of the action. (Indicative mood only.)
		John 3:3 ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι “Truly, truly, I say to you. . .”	
Short duration	Progressive (Descriptive)	“am/are doing”	Present time. Emphasizes that a present action is <i>ongoing</i> or continuous over a relatively short period of time.
		Mark 1:37 πάντες ζητοῦσίν σε “All are searching for you.”	
Long duration	Extending-from-Past (Past action still in progress)	“have been doing”	Expresses an action which was <i>begun in the past</i> , but is <i>continuing</i> into the present of the speaker. (Different from the perfect, which only indicates that the <i>results</i> of the action continue into the present.)
		Luke 15:29 τοσαῦτα ἔτη δουλεύω σοι “I have served you for these many years.”	
Multiple-event	Iterative	“keep on doing” “am repeatedly doing”	Present time. Emphasizes that the action is being performed <i>repeatedly</i> , either by the same individual or by various members of a group.
		Matt 17:15 πολλάκις πίπτει εἰς τὸ πῦρ “Many times he falls into the fire.”	
	Customary (Habitual or General)	“usually does” “customarily does” “continually is”	Present time. Emphasizes that an action is being performed <i>regularly</i> , habitually, or that a state is continuing over an extended time. Such customary action takes place over a <i>broader span of time</i> than with the iterative present.
	Luke 18:12 νηστεύω δις τοῦ σαββάτου “ I customarily fast twice a week.”		
Multiple-event	Gnomic	“happens [as a general, timeless fact]”	No time reference. The present tense here describes an action or event which happens as a general rule, without pointing to any specific instance. Used in proverbs or sayings.
		John 3:8 τὸ πνεῦμα ὅπου θέλει πνεῖ “The wind blows where it wants.”	

Special Uses of the Present

Historical (Dramatic)	“did”	<i>Past time.</i> There is no emphasis here on the ongoing nature of the action. The historic present often carries a sense indistinguishable from that of the aorist. It is simply used for the sake of vividness or emphasis. <i>Used only in narrative writing.</i>
	Mark 1:41 αὐτοῦ ἥψατο καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ “He touched him and said to him. . .”	
Perfective	“has done”	Emphasizes that the results of a past action are still continuing.
	1 John 5:20 ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἦκε , καὶ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν διάνοιαν “The Son of God has come and has given us understanding.”	
Conative (Tendential, Voluntative)	“wants to do” “is trying to do” “is almost doing”	This use of the present indicates that someone is either desiring/trying to perform an action, or desiring/trying to complete an action.
	Gal 5:4 οἵτινες ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦσθε “[You] who are trying to be justified by the law . . .”	
Futuristic	“is soon going to do” “will certainly do”	Future time. Usually adds an idea of immediacy and/or certainty.
	Rom 6:9 Χριστὸς . . . οὐκέτι ἀποθνήσκει “Christ . . . is no longer going to die. ”	
Present in Indirect Speech	“was doing”	In indirect speech in Greek the tenses of the original speaker’s utterance are retained. In English, however, we shift the tenses back toward the past. Hence in English translation present tenses in indirect speech must be translated with an English past tense.
	Mark 2:1 ἠκούσθη ὅτι ἐν οἴκῳ ἔστιν “It was heard that he was at home.”	