Present continuous (I am doing)

A Study this example situation:

Sarah is in her car. She is on her way to work.
She **is driving** to work.

This means: she is driving *now*, at the time of speaking.
The action is not finished.

Am/is/are + -ing is the *present continuous*:

I	**am**	(= I'**m**)	driving
he/she/it	**is**	(= he'**s** etc.)	working
we/you/they	**are**	(= we'**re** etc.)	doing etc.

B **I am doing** something = I'm in the middle of doing it; I've started doing it and I haven't finished:
- Please don't make so much noise. **I'm trying** to work. (*not* I try)
- 'Where's Mark?' 'He'**s having** a shower.' (*not* He has a shower)
- Let's go out now. It **isn't raining** any more. (*not* It doesn't rain)
- *(at a party)* Hi, Jane. **Are** you **enjoying** the party? (*not* Do you enjoy)
- What's all that noise? What'**s going** on? (= What's happening?)

Sometimes the action is not happening at the time of speaking. For example:

Steve is talking to a friend on the phone. He says:

I'm reading a really good book at the moment. It's about a man who …

Steve is not reading the book at the time of speaking.
He means that he has started it, but has not finished it yet.
He is in the middle of reading it.

Some more examples:
- Kate wants to work in Italy, so she'**s learning** Italian. (but perhaps she isn't learning Italian at the time of speaking)
- Some friends of mine **are building** their own house. They hope to finish it next summer.

C You can use the present continuous with **today / this week / this year** etc. (periods around now):
- A: You'**re working hard today**. (*not* You work hard today)
  B: Yes, I have a lot to do.
- The company I work for **isn't doing** so well **this year**.

D We use the present continuous when we talk about changes happening around now, especially with these verbs:

get   change   become   increase   rise   fall   grow   improve   begin   start

- **Is** your English **getting** better? (*not* Does your English get better)
- The population of the world **is increasing** very fast. (*not* increases)
- At first I didn't like my job, but I'**m beginning** to enjoy it now. (*not* I begin)

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