



UNIT 1

Le présent simple & le présent continu / UK politics

1 – Irregular Verbs.

Choose the correct verb and put it into the correct tense. Each verb can only be used once. Answers are provided in the Key at the end of the unit.

Arise ; bear ; blow ; bring ; break ; broadcast ; buy ; burn ; choose ; cling ; cut ; deal ; dig ; draw ; dwell.

1. The news _____ during the night and it was _____ immediately.
2. Terrorists _____ up the building which _____ and collapsed before the fire fighters could rescue everyone.
3. I've _____ back the sweater I _____ yesterday as it doesn't fit.
4. A problem has just _____ in the office. I'll be home late".
5. Her description _____ no relation whatsoever to reality.
6. The article _____ with current economic stakes. It mostly _____ on globalization.
7. He _____ to his dreams and eventually achieved his goals.
8. Even after he left the firm, he still _____ a substantial pension which angered the unions.
9. He _____ into his pockets and dropped a two-euro coin into the homeless man's cup.
10. "We've _____ not to outsource their activity abroad". "Can the company afford it ?" "Well, we've _____ down all unnecessary expenses."

2.a – Grammar : Le présent simple & le présent continu.

Comparez : (1) Look ! It's raining (2) It often rains in Brittany.

Le présent continu en (1) se justifie par le fait que la phrase est ancrée dans une situation particulière. On pourrait ajouter : *now*. En revanche, (2) peut être prononcé à un moment où il ne pleut pas en Bretagne. Il ne fait pas référence à une situation spécifique mais signale un fait coutumier.

- La forme Be + Ing ne correspond pas seulement à l'expression « *en train de* » car sinon, comment justifier la présence du présent simple dans : « You look ill » ou encore « I feel exhausted » qui tous deux concernent bien une situation spécifique. De même, il arrive qu'une action, qui semble habituelle, s'exprime au moyen de Be+ Ving.

Comparez :

- ☞ John **is working** at a garage : John travaille dans un garage (sous-entendu : c'est temporaire)
- ☞ John **works** at a garage : John travaille dans un garage (c'est son métier)

On gardera, toutefois à l'esprit que :

- **Le présent simple** s'emploie pour parler d'une habitude (*what does your father do ? = as a job*), d'une caractéristique permanente et peut exprimer une vérité générale. Il s'utilise également pour une demande d'information ou l'apport d'une information brute.

- **Le présent continu** (Be + Ing) sert à repérer un fait par rapport à une situation. L'énonciateur ne s'exprime alors plus de façon neutre, il fait un commentaire qui peut soit porter sur le déroulement d'une action, soit sur le sujet du verbe. Le présent continu s'utilise également pour parler de projets.

La forme Be + Ving s'applique à toutes les formes du verbe : présent (he **is repairing** the car), preterit (he **was repairing** the car), parfait (he **has been repairing** the car), à l'infinitif après les auxiliaires de modalité (he **must be repairing** the car). La forme Be+Ing s'utilise également au passif (the car **is being repaired**).

- Certains verbes comme *believe, love, like, want, look*, ou encore *know* ne s'emploient pas normalement à la forme progressive.

2.b - Exercises : Présent ou présent continu ? Choisissez la réponse qui convient.

1. Water _____ at 100 degrees Celsius.
a/ boils
b/ is boiling
2. 'We _____ now, you know. You haven't forgotten, have you ?'
a/ leave
b/ are leaving
3. The Oxford bus _____ at nine.
a/ leaves
b/ is leaving
4. 'Where is my book ? You've forgotten it, haven't you ? You (always) _____ things !'
a/ forget
b/ are forgetting
5. Susan has something the matter with her kidneys and _____ nothing but water.
a/ drinks
b/ is drinking
6. Paul _____ a lot of Mary these days.
a/ sees
b/ is seeing
7. 'How much did you say it was ? Three hundred euros. I _____ three times as much for my room on the fifth floor !'
a/ pay
b/ am paying
8. 'He's like that. He _____ stupid little jokes about her clothes, but I don't think she sees what he's driving at.'
a/ always makes
b/ is always making
9. 'Don't get all worked up about it, Andy. He _____.'
a/ doesn't sneak off
b/ isn't sneaking off
10. 'I _____ you, you'd better not fiddle with my computer.'
a/ warn
b/ am warning

3-a - Key Issues : UK POLITICS.

§1 Britain is a monarchy, a country governed by a monarch, a King or a Queen –as is the case today with Elizabeth II; Britain celebrated the Queen's jubilee in June 2002, which means that she has been reigning over the country for fifty years. Yet the Crown has a limited political sway, the country is actually governed by the Prime Minister and his or her Cabinet –please keep the word "government" or "administration" for the United States and prefer "Cabinet" for Britain. The Queen is the head of the State –in theory- and the head of the Church of England. As a result, there is no formal separation of Church and State.

Another political specificity of Britain is the importance of the nobility, especially with the House of Lords, which is the British Upper Chamber –the equivalent of a Senate, as opposed to the Lower House, which is the House of Commons. However the House of Lords considered as an archaic legacy has been reformed by Tony Blair shortly after he took office.

The party with the largest number of seat after a general election forms H.M.'s Government - Her Majesty's Government. The leader of this party automatically becomes Prime Minister. The other party becomes H.M.'s Opposition and forms the Shadow Cabinet which could take over in any case of change of majority. The Cabinet and the Shadow Cabinet are those sitting in the front row of the House of Commons while the less important politicians sit at the back –they are called the Backbenchers. To belong to the Cabinet, one must be an M.P., the Prime Minister included. Blair first became Prime Minister in 1997. His Party, the Labour Party, then won the General Election again in 2001, and once again in 2005. The Conservative Party has been in dire straits

since Blair's rise to power; today, the Conservatives may have found a charismatic leader with David Cameron. On June 27, 2007, in his third term in office, Tony Blair resigned and Gordon Brown, his former Chancellor of the Exchequer became the new Prime Minister. No election was necessary. Brown is famous for his long term rivalry with Blair and for his Euro-scepticism.

§2 During his 1997 campaign, Tony Blair pledged to grant more autonomy to the different components of the United Kingdom: this process of giving more political independence to Wales and Scotland, is called devolution. As early as July 1997 –Labour came to power in June- a White Paper, which is like the draft of a future Bill- was published on devolution, followed by referendums held in Scotland and Wales in September. Both resulted in the population agreeing with the propositions for local assemblies –though by a small margin in Wales.

Therefore in 1998 both the Scotland Act and the Government of Wales Bill were introduced, giving birth to a Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly. These two bodies actually came into existence after the May 1999 elections in Scotland and Wales. Only some of the powers and decisions are devolved. For instance, the Welsh Assembly is entitled to take decisions concerning health, agriculture, housing, or one may quote education, the environment or arts for the Scottish Parliament. Yet, fields like the economy, taxes, justice remain within the London power. Just so there is no confusion: the British system is not to be compared to a federal one. Today, the debate is also focused on granting more autonomy to the English regions.