

8. The present tense - use

1 Use

The present tense is used in the following contexts:

1.1 When describing something that is in the process of being accomplished:

Où est Pierre? Il **joue** au tennis avec Paul
Where's Pierre? He's playing tennis with Paul

1.2 When describing something that happens regularly:

Le samedi matin nous **allons** toujours au supermarché
On Saturday mornings we always go to the supermarket

1.3 When making a general observation about the world:

L'eau **bout** à 100°C
Water boils at 100°C
Rien n'**est** laid pour celui qui aime
Beauty is in the eye of the beholder

1.4 When describing something that began in the past and that is still continuing:

Je **travaille** à Manchester depuis quatre ans
I have been working in Manchester for four years
Ça fait combien de temps que tu **habites** ici?
How long have you been living here?

1.5 When describing something that has been timetabled or pre-arranged:

Le train **part** dans 5 minutes
The train leaves in 5 minutes
L'été prochain nous **faisons** un voyage en France
Next summer we're going on a trip to France

1.6 When narrating actions in the past to make them seem more vivid:

Nous nous promenions en ville. Tout à coup un jeune nous **aborde**. Il a l'air fatigué et malade. Il nous **demande** de l'argent.
We were walking in town. Suddenly a young man comes up to us. He looks tired and ill. He asks us for money.