

The queen walks forward ★★★

We use the present simple (*I go, she runs*) in two very different ways.

A The first – and most common – way is to join together the past, the present and the future, like this: (and see Grammar Bite 18, present simple and progressive)

I live here.

Charlie plays football on the weekend.

Susan works in a bank.

We often go to see a movie.

B Here is a different way: talking about the immediate, instantaneous present:

B1 Commentary



The Queen walks slowly along the line of people; she pauses and speaks to...

B2 Explanation



I pour the flour into the bowl, then I break the eggs ... oops!

Cartoons: Holden-Hotopf

B3 Turning the past into the immediate present



It is 1943, and there is an air raid over London. As night falls, we make our way to the tube station, where we spend the night...

(Present tense makes the story more dramatic)

Comment

The two uses of the present simple are almost the opposite of each other. examples in **A** are over a long time, in **B** they are almost instantaneous.

Quick check

Each sentence is an example of A, B1, B2 or B3. Which is which?

1 Waterloo, 1815. Napoleon marches his troops across the plain...

2 I work in the city of London. I've been there for 10 years.

3 First I turn the computer on, then I type in my password...

4 "The car stops, and the President steps out to loud cheers."

5 Jake always cooks supper for the family.

