ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Present Tenses Test B1 Grammar Exercises

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Explanations

1. Liz and James _____ dinner at a restaurant on Saturdays, but they _____ at home now.
✔ **D) usually eat / are eating**
Use the present simple with **usually** for a habit (**on Saturdays**). Use the present continuous for an action happening **now**: **they are eating**. Not **never eat**, because **but** shows a contrast with their normal habit.

2. Rick _____ me for some money, but he _____ me back.
✔ **B) is always asking / never pays**
Always with the present continuous (**is always asking**) shows that a repeated action annoys the speaker. The second part is a simple habit, so it takes the present simple: **never pays**. Not **has never asked**, because **but he never pays me back** only makes sense if Rick does ask.

3. More and more people _____ of cancer these days, and we still _____ no cure for it.
✔ **A) are dying / have**
More and more and **these days** show a changing situation, so we use the present continuous: **are dying**. **Have** is a state verb meaning 'possess', so it is not used in the continuous: **we have no cure**, not **are having**.

4. Your clothes are covered in mud, Jason! _____ you _____ outdoors in this weather?
✔ **B) Have / been playing**
The muddy clothes are a present result of a recent, longer activity, so we use the present perfect continuous: **Have you been playing**. Not **Are you playing**, because Jason is not playing now; he has stopped.

5. We _____ it strange, but a piece of iron and a feather _____ at the same speed in a vacuum.
✔ **A) find / fall**
Find (= think, have an opinion) is a state verb, so we use the present simple: **we find it strange**. A scientific fact also takes the present simple: **they fall at the same speed**. Not **are falling**, because this is a general truth, not something happening now.

6. Nancy _____ a party next Friday, but I _____. I have an important meeting at that time.
✔ **A) is giving / am not going**
For fixed future plans and arrangements we use the present continuous: **Nancy is giving a party next Friday**, **I am not going**. Not **don't go**, because the present simple is not used for personal plans like this.

7. Why on earth _____ so fast? The train _____ at four o'clock and it is only one o'clock.
✔ **D) are you driving / leaves**
The driving is happening now, so we use the present continuous: **are you driving**. For timetables (trains, buses) we use the present simple, even for the future: **the train leaves at four**.

8. Dad _____ as a baker for forty years and he _____ to work for at least another twenty years.
✔ **B) has been working / wants**
An action that started in the past and continues now, with **for forty years**, takes the present perfect continuous: **has been working**. **Want** is a state verb, so it is in the present simple: **he wants**, not **is wanting**.

9. _____ that small house over there? I _____ there since I was born.
✔ **A) Do you see / have been living**
See (with your eyes) is a state verb, so we say **Do you see**, not **Are you seeing**. With **since I was born** we use the present perfect continuous for a situation that continues up to now: **have been living**.

10. I am not sure, but I think I _____ to France five or six times so far.
✔ **B) have been**
For life experience with a number of times and **so far**, we use the present perfect: **I have been to France five or six times**. Not **have been going**, because we count completed visits, which does not take the continuous.

11. It _____ awful in this room because Karen _____ here for hours without opening a window.
✔ **D) smells / has been smoking**
Smell (= have a smell) is a state verb, so we say **it smells**, not **is smelling**. **For hours** shows an activity continuing up to now with a present result, so we use the present perfect continuous: **has been smoking**.

12. She rarely _____, but she usually _____ to get a high mark in maths.
✔ **C) studies / manages**
Rarely and **usually** describe habits, so both verbs are in the present simple: **studies** and **manages**. Not **is studying**, because the continuous is for actions happening now, not habits.

13. We _____ already _____ a payment. As far as I know, it _____ all the taxes.
✔ **A) have / made / includes**
Already goes with the present perfect for a finished action with a present result: **We have already made a payment**. **Include** is a state verb, so it takes the present simple: **it includes all the taxes**.

14. She _____ usually _____ that way, but these days she _____ very rude to everybody.
✓ C) doesn't / act / is being
A normal habit with **usually** takes the present simple: **She doesn't usually act that way**. **Be** in the present continuous (**is being rude**) describes temporary behaviour, here **these days**. Not **is very rude**, because that describes her character, not a temporary change.

15. They _____ just _____ their job, and they _____ a coffee break at the moment.
✓ D) have / finished / are having
Just goes with the present perfect for a very recent finished action: **have just finished**. **At the moment** shows an action in progress now, so we use the present continuous: **are having a coffee break** (**have** here means 'take', so it can be continuous).

16. In the latest episode of that TV series, Jill _____ a terrible accident, but a handsome guy _____ her immediately to a hospital.
✓ D) has / takes
We often use the present simple to tell the story of a film, book or TV episode: **Jill has a terrible accident**, **a handsome guy takes her to hospital**. Not **has had / has taken**, because we are telling the events in order, not giving results.

17. Matt _____ lemonade since this morning, but he _____ only three glasses so far.
✓ B) has been selling / has sold
Since this morning shows an activity continuing up to now, so we use the present perfect continuous: **has been selling**. **Only three glasses so far** counts a finished result, so we use the present perfect simple: **has sold**.

18. Molly _____ her driving test four times, but she is so determined that she _____ still _____ to pass it.
✓ D) has failed / is / trying
Four times counts experiences up to now, so we use the present perfect: **has failed**. **Still** with an action going on at present takes the present continuous: **she is still trying**. Not **has been failing**, because we count the separate failures.

19. Steve _____ to the cafe for lunch, but he _____ back in the office now.
✓ B) has been / is
Has been to means he went and has come back: **Steve has been to the cafe**, and now **he is back in the office**. Not **has gone**, because **has gone to** means he is still there.

20. The classroom _____ empty because all the children _____ out to play basketball in the garden.
✓ A) is / have gone
The present state takes the present simple: **The classroom is empty**. **Have gone** means the children left and are still away, which explains why the room is empty. Not **have been**, because that would mean they went out and came back.

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