ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Self Study Guide – Test Your English Grammar Part 04

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Explanations

1. How much money _____ him this time?
✓ **D) do you owe**
Owe (to have to pay money back) is a state verb, so it is not normally used in the continuous form. Use the present simple question: **How much money do you owe him?** Not **own**, which means 'to have something as your property'.

2. Look at her! She _____ the soup to see if it needs more salt.
✓ **D) is tasting**
Here **taste** is an action (trying the soup), so it can be continuous. **Look at her!** shows it is happening now, so we use the present continuous: **is tasting**.

3. The milk _____ sour. Have you been keeping it for a long time?
✓ **C) smells**
Smell meaning 'have a smell' is a state verb, so we use the present simple: **The milk smells sour.** Not **is smelling**, because the milk is not doing an action.

4. I tried a bit of the cake to see how it _____.
✓ **A) tasted**
The main verb **tried** is in the past, so the second verb also goes into the past: **to see how it tasted**. **Taste** meaning 'have a flavour' is a state verb, so the continuous **was tasting** is wrong.

5. This soup _____ of disinfectant.
✓ **B) tastes**
Taste of something (have the flavour of it) is a state verb, so we use the present simple. The subject **this soup** is singular: **tastes**. Not **is tasting**, because the soup is not doing an action.

6. That bottle _____ petrol and we used it to fill the lawnmower.
✓ **C) contained**
Contain is a state verb, so it is not used in the continuous form. The story is in the past (**we used**), so we need the past simple: **contained**. Not **was containing**, because state verbs are not normally continuous.

7. – What are you doing?

– I _____ to get this car started.
✓ **D) want**
Want is a state verb, so we use the present simple even for something happening now: **I want to get this car started.** Not **am wanting**, because **want** is normally not used in continuous forms.

8. 'I love this hair-do – my hair _____ so modern now.'
✓ **A) looks**
Look meaning 'seem' is a state verb, so we use the present simple. **Hair** is uncountable and takes a singular verb: **my hair looks**. Not **look**, because **hair** is singular here.

9. Say it again, I _____ you.
✓ **D) don't hear**
Hear (sound reaches your ears) is a state verb, so it is not normally continuous: **I don't hear you** (more often **I can't hear you**). Not **am not listening**, because the speaker is trying to listen and asks to hear it again.

10. – Would you like a cup of coffee, Dr Ho?

– Oh no, thanks. It _____.
✓ **B) smells delicious, but I don't drink coffee.**
Smell meaning 'have a smell' is a state verb, so we say **It smells delicious**. **I don't drink coffee** is a general habit, so we use the present simple. Options with **is smelling** or **am not drinking** use the continuous where it does not fit.

11. This estate has no permanent owner! Who _____ this time?
✓ **C) does it belong to**
We say **belong to someone**, and **belong** is a state verb, so it takes the present simple. In a question the preposition goes at the end: **Who does it belong to?** The other options miss **to** or wrongly use the continuous.

12. Come and sit by Leo and me. We _____ a gossip all about the new neighbours. Join us if you are interested.
✓ **D) are having**
Have meaning 'do or experience' (**have a gossip, have a chat**) is an action, so it can be continuous. The gossip is happening now (**Join us**), so we use the present continuous: **are having**. Not **has been having**, because **we** needs **have**, not **has**.

13. I think it is a pity you don't take more exercise. You _____ fat.
✓ **A) are getting**
We use the present continuous for a change that is happening around now: **You are getting fat.** Not **get**, because the present simple would describe a general habit, not a change in progress.

14. Look at this sign. It _____ here 'Leave your car here.' Why not park our car here?
✓ **A) reads**
To report what a sign or notice says, we use **say** or **read** in the present simple: **It reads 'Leave your car here.'** Not **is writing**, because the sign does not write anything.

15. Tom and Mr. Pitt _____ a stormy conversation. I wonder what they are talking about.
✓ **C) are having**
Have a conversation is an action, and **I wonder what they are talking about** shows it is happening now. So we use the present continuous: **are having**. Not **has been having**, because **Tom and Mr. Pitt** is plural.

16. – Who _____ champagne? – Me, when I can afford it.
✓ **C) drinks**
The answer **Me, when I can afford it** shows we are talking about a habit, so we use the present simple. With **who** as the subject there is no **do**: **Who drinks champagne?**

17. – What _____ at?

– A strange bird is flying over there.
✓ **C) are you looking**
The bird **is flying** now, so the question is about an action happening at the moment. Use the present continuous: **What are you looking at?**

18. Hi, Mike. I'm in France now. Can you imagine what a great time I _____?
✓ **C) am having**
Have a great time is an experience happening now (**I'm in France now**), so we use the present continuous: **I am having**. Not **have**, because the present simple is for habits and facts.

19. – _____ the violin now? – Actually, that's the radio you hear now.
✓ **D) Is your son playing**
The word **now** and the answer about the radio show the question is about a sound at this moment. So we use the present continuous: **Is your son playing the violin now?** Not **Does your son play**, which asks about a habit or ability.

20. Scientists believe the weather _____ now.
✓ **A) is changing**
We use the present continuous for a change in progress around now: **the weather is changing**. The word **now** is the clue. Not **changes**, which would be a general fact.

21. You know the current situation: cinema audiences _____ in the United States now.
✓ **B) are declining**
The current situation and **now** describe a trend in progress, so we use the present continuous. **Audiences** is plural: **are declining**. Not **is decreasing**, because the verb must be plural.

22. I can't interrupt him just now. He _____ a phone call to Australia at the moment.
✓ **C) is making**
At the moment and **I can't interrupt him** show the action is happening now, so we use the active present continuous: **He is making a phone call.** Not **is being made**, which is passive.

23. – The telephone is ringing, Ann. Can you get it?

– No, I _____ dinner. Maybe a little bit later.
✓ **B) am having**
Have dinner means 'eat dinner'. It is an action, so it can be continuous. The speaker is eating right now and can't answer the phone, so we use **am having**. Not **have**, because that would describe a habit.

24. Paris is wonderful! I like the food here, and so I _____ like mad.
✓ **A) am eating**
The speaker is in Paris now and describes what they are doing during this stay, so we use the present continuous: **I am eating like mad** (eating a lot). Not **am not eating**, because **I like the food** gives the opposite meaning.

25. Whitman is a historian. He _____ on a history of cross-cultural dating customs.
✓ **C) is currently working**
We use the present continuous for a temporary project going on around now: **He is currently working on a history of…** The adverb **currently** usually goes after **is**. Not **currently work** or **currently write**, because **he** needs a verb with **-s**.

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