

Italiano With Jodina

STARE + GERUNDIO & STARE PER + INFINITO

If someone asks you, "Che cosa fai?" There are two possible types of answers, depending on the intent of the question:

"Lavoro in una ditta che esporta prodotti tipici toscani." [I work in a company that exports typical Tuscan products.]

Or, "Faccio una passeggiata." [I am taking a walk/stroll.]

The first answer is in the present indicative, and tells a fact: what you do (for a living). The second tells what you are engaged in doing at that very moment, which in English MUST be expressed in the gerund form (the verb 'to be' plus verb + -ing).

In Italian, however, the present indicative is used interchangeably to talk about both actions that are facts AND actions happening in the present moment.

That is why the phrase "Leggo un libro." can mean "I read a book." (if the question refers to what do you do on your lunchbreak), or "I'm reading a book." (if it is asking what you are doing right now).

There is an equivalent - **'to be' + verb + -ing-** construction in Italian:

-stare + verbo in forma gerundio- *-are* verbs take the ending *-ando*: parlare → parlando
-ere and *-ire* verbs take the ending *-endo*: leggere → leggendo

dormire → dormendo

So in the previous example, if you were saying what you were doing in the moment, you could say either "Leggo un libro." Or "Sto leggendo un libro." to communicate the exact thing. This true whether the question is posed as "Che cosa fai?" or "Che cosa stai facendo?"

NB: While the **-stare + verbo in forma gerundio-** construction is common in Italian, it is MUCH LESS USED than in English, which has only one option for communicating a 'present continuous' action, and that is the - **'to be' + verb + -ing-** construction

This tense or form in English is called *the present progressive* or the *present continuous*. In Italian it's referred to as the *presente progressivo*.

The **gerundio** of common irregular verbs:

FARE – FACENDO

BERE – BEVENDO

DIRE – DICENDO

If you're answer to the question "Che cosa fai?" or "Che cosa stai facendo?" is that you are **about to do something**, use this construction to express it: **stare + verbo infinito**

For example: "Sto per uscire." → I am about to go out., "Stiamo per mangiare." → We are about to eat.