The Simple Present vs. the Present Progressive

Simple Present

Past | Present | Future

1. A Fact, an idea, or a belief that was true in the past, is true in the present, and will be true in the future.
   [A general / timeless statement of fact]
   - Water freezes at 0 degree Centigrade.
   - The world is round.
2. A Habitual or everyday (timeless) activity.
   - My class begins at eight fifteen.
   - She always eats pizza for lunch.
3. Certain verbs cannot be progressive (nonprogressive verbs). They are not ‘action’ verbs, but ‘state / condition’ verbs. The simple present is used even when the meaning is temporary.
   - Tom has a big house. (*Tom is having a big house.)
   - Some common non-progressive verbs are: believe, know, love, remember, suppose, and want.

Present Progressive

Past | Present | Future

1. An activity in progress at the moment of speaking, usually limited in time.
   [It has clear beginning and end.]
   - Tom is sleeping right now.   cf. Tom sleeps a lot.
2. Something generally in progress a period of time (a week, a month, etc.).
   - It may not in progress right now. Present progressive often expresses activities that will continue for a limited period of time, or are exceptional in some way.
   - I’m taking Math 201 this semester. (This semester only, not always.)
3. A very frequent activity about which we feel some (often negative) emotion. It is used with always, forever, or continually.
   - She’s always complaining. (This expresses irritation.)