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The *-te imasu* form of a verb has one of the following two meanings, and which meaning a given verb is used in depends on the semantic characteristic of the verb.

1. Ongoing action (an action in progress)

- This meaning occurs when a verb describing an activity that lasts for some time is used with *ています*.  
たべます、のみます、よみます、まちます、します  
e.g. 田中さんは いまべんきょう しています。  
やまださんは ケーキを たべています。
- You can also use *～ています* to describe what a person does by occupation or some regular activity a person is engaged in.  
e.g. わたしは日本語をおしえています。  
This example has two interpretations. One is that “I am teaching Japanese right this minute and the other is that I am a teacher of the Japanese language but not necessarily in class right now.

2. State in effect (a past event connected with the present)

- If the verb describes something that happens more or less instantaneously, the meaning of *-te imasu* will be that the action has been completed and a state is in effect as a result.
- Wearing :
  - きています
  - ネクタイ/ゆびわ/スカーフをしています。
  - スカート/くつ/くつしたを はいています
  - ぼうしをかぶっています。
- Other examples include しります、おきます (to wake up)、すみます、つとめます (to work for)
- When motion verbs such as *いきます* and *きます* are used with *ています*, it indicates the current states that result from prior movements.  
e.g. たなかさんは いま 東京に行っています。 Means Tanaka-san has gone to and is now in Tokyo, not that Tanaka-san is on his/her way to Tokyo.