SUMMARY – THE PRESENT TENSES (SIMPLE, CONTINUOUS AND PERFECT)
As a general rule, the contracted forms is not used in narrative or descriptive passages in literature, in newspaper articles, in business English and in essays.

A: **The present simple** (I play)

Don’t forget the –s in the third person singular.

**Use:**

1. The simple present is used to describe a habit, or something that often or usually takes place. It is also commonly found with frequency adverbs (always, generally, often, etc…)
   
   Eg: I play tennis at weekends.
   I usually eat chocolate twice a day.

2. It is also used for a future journey, when telling about timetables or travelling arrangements by travel agents.
   
   Eg: His train arrives in Liverpool at 2.15.

B: **The present continuous tense** (I am playing)

Don’t forget to double the last consonant of one-syllable verbs (cvc) (eg: to hit – hitting)

**Use:**

1. It describes something that is happening now, at the moment of speaking.
   
   Eg: What are you doing?
   He is doing his homework at the moment.

2. It expresses an intentional action that is taking place in the near future with a reference to future time.
   
   Eg: Jane is arriving at eight this evening.

3. Some verbs cannot be used in the continuous tense. They are modal verbs, verbs of appearance, emotion, existence, knowledge, perception, possession, thought and expressing a wish.
   
   Eg: He appears to be very happy at the moment.

**BUT**

**to have** can be used in the continuous tenses except when it means to possess

**to see** can be used in the continuous tense when it means to meet

**to think** can be used in the continuous tense when it means to consider

Eg. He is thinking of selling his house in Chester.

C: **The present perfect simple** (I have played)

**Use:**

1. The present perfect simple is related to a present situation. It describes something which has already happened and which is still important now. The action is still felt in the present time. There is no indication of time, because it is not important. What is important is that the action has already taken place and that the result of this action can be felt now.
   
   Eg: He has gone to the cinema. (and that’s where he is now)

2. It is used with certain adverbs (just, lately, recently, never, ever, yet?, not yet, so far, before, up to now, for, since, etc…)

D: **The present perfect continuous (I have been playing)**

**There is no present perfect continuous in the negative form** or if the number of times that an action has been taken place is given. (eg. She has written three letters this morning).

**Use:**

1. This tense describes an action which has started in the past, has been continuing for some time or has been repeated up to the present moment and continues in the future.
   
   Eg: She has been working since early this morning and she hopes to finish in a few hours. (What is important is the link between the past and the present)