Present tenses are often used to tell stories. This usually happens in an informal style. In stories, the simple present tense is used for events that happen one after another. The present continuous tense is used for background actions.

*Peter is strolling across his garden one sunny morning. Suddenly he notices a bird stumbling awkwardly as it tries to run away from him. It is dragging the feathers of one wing over the ground, while it flaps the other wing. Wishing to help the poor bird, which appears to be hurt, David hurries after it.*

The simple present tense is common in summaries of plays, stories etc.

*In Act I, Hamlet meets the ghost of his father. The ghost tells him...*

**Commentaries**

In commentaries, the use of tenses is similar. The simple present tense is used for the quicker actions and events. The present continuous tense is used for longer actions and situations.

**Instructions and demonstrations**

We often use present tenses to give instructions, directions and demonstrations.

*How do I get the railway station?’ ‘Go straight on to the traffic lights, then you turn right...’*

First I put some butter into a frying pan and light the gas; then while the butter is melting I take some cashew nuts and raisins and ...