

### State Verbs

State verbs are verbs which do not normally have continuous tenses because they describe a state rather than an action. These include:

- ◆ **verbs which express likes and dislikes:** *like, love, hate, dislike, enjoy, prefer, etc.*  
e.g. Cathy **likes** romantic films.
- ◆ **verbs of perception:** *believe, know, notice, remember, forget, recognise, understand, realise, seem, think, etc.* e.g. I **don't believe** a word he's saying.
- ◆ **verbs of the senses:** *see, hear, feel, taste, look, smell, sound.* We often use **can** or **could** with these verbs when we refer to what we see, hear, etc. at the moment of speaking.  
e.g. The soup **tastes** delicious.  
John **must be** in the attic. I **can hear** his footsteps.
- ◆ **some other verbs:** *be, contain, fit, include, matter, need, belong, cost, owe, mean, own, appear, want, have (=possess), etc.*  
e.g. This book **is** mine. It **belongs** to me.

Some state verbs have continuous tenses, but there is a difference in meaning.

Study the following examples:

- 1) I **think** she's Italian. (=believe)  
I'm **thinking about** my holiday. (=am considering)
- 2) The soup **tastes** awful. (=has an awful flavour)  
She's **tasting** the soup. (=is testing the flavour of)
- 3) I **can see** an aeroplane in the sky. (=perceive with my eyes)  
I'm **seeing** Jill tonight. (=am meeting)
- 4) Susan **looks** tired. (=appears)  
Susan **is looking** at some photos. (=is studying)
- 5) The room **smells** of perfume. (=has the smell)  
The cat **is smelling** its food. (=is sniffing)
- 6) This towel **feels** soft. (=has a soft texture)  
Jill **is feeling** her son's forehead. (=is touching)
- 7) He **is** selfish. (character – permanent state)  
He **is being** selfish. (behaviour – temporary situation)
- 8) He **has** a sports car. (=possesses)  
He's **having lunch** now. (=is eating – idiom)

Some idioms with **have** include:

|      |                                          |
|------|------------------------------------------|
| have | breakfast / lunch / dinner, etc.         |
|      | a bath / shower / swim / party, etc.     |
|      | a(n) accident / experience / dream, etc. |
|      | a baby                                   |
|      | difficulty / fun / trouble, etc.         |

11

Put the verbs in brackets into the present simple or the present continuous.

- 1 A: ...*Do you know*... (you/know) that man over there?  
B: Actually, I do. He's Muriel's husband.
- 2 A: Are you doing anything tomorrow evening?  
B: Yes. I ..... (see) Jack at nine o'clock.
- 3 A: I ..... (see) you're feeling better.  
B: Yes, I am, thank you.
- 4 A: What's that noise?  
B: The people next door ..... (have) a party.
- 5 A: Graham ..... (have) a new computer.  
B: I know. I've already seen it.
- 6 A: This dress ..... (not/fit) me any more.  
B: Why don't you buy a new one?
- 7 A: Your perfume ..... (smell) nice. What is it?  
B: It's a new perfume called Sunshine.
- 8 A: What is Jane doing?  
B: She ..... (smell) the flowers in the garden.
- 9 A: What ..... (you/look) at?  
B: Some photos I took during my holidays. They aren't very good, though.
- 10 A: You ..... (look) very pretty today.  
B: Thank you. I've just had my hair cut.
- 11 A: I ..... (think) we're being followed.  
B: Don't be silly! It's just your imagination.
- 12 A: Is anything wrong?  
B: No. I ..... (just/think) about the party tonight.
- 13 A: This fabric ..... (feel) like silk.  
B: It is silk, and it was very expensive.
- 14 A: What are you doing?  
B: I ..... (feel) the radiator to see if it's getting warm.
- 15 A: She ..... (be) generous, isn't she?  
B: Yes, she has never been a mean person.
- 16 A: He ..... (be) very quiet today, isn't he?  
B: Yes, I think he has some problems.
- 17 A: Would you like some cherries?  
B: Yes, please. I ..... (love) cherries. They're my favourite fruit.
- 18 A: I'm sorry, but I ..... (not understand) what you mean.  
B: Shall I explain it again?
- 19 A: The children are making lots of noise today.  
B: I know, but they ..... (have) fun.
- 20 A: This cake ..... (taste) awful.  
B: I think I forgot to put the sugar in it!