

State Verbs

State or stative verbs are verbs which do not usually 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, fancy, can't stand, not mind, etc.
e.g. Cathy **likes** romantic films.
- **Verbs of perception:**
believe, know, notice, remember, forget, wish, understand, realise, wonder, think, (dis)agree, doubt, guess, hope, suppose, etc.
e.g. I **don't believe** a word he's saying.
- **Verbs of the senses:**
see, hear, taste, look, smell, sound, touch, feel, seem. 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.
Dad is in the attic. I **can hear** him.
- **Some other verbs:** be, have (= possess), want, need, include, belong (to), weigh, cost, owe, fit, mean, own, measure, matter, need, contain, lack, appear, deserve, etc.
e.g. This book **is** mine. It **belongs** to me.

Some state verbs have continuous tenses, but there is a DIFFERENCE IN MEANING. These are some examples:

- I **think** she's Italian. (= **believe**)
I'm **thinking** about my holiday. (= **consider**)
- The soup **tastes** awful. (= **have an awful flavour**)
She's **tasting** the soup. (= **test the flavour of**)
- I can **see** a plane in the sky. (= **perceive**)
I'm **seeing** Jill tonight. (= **meet someone**)
- Susan **looks** tired. (= **appear**)
Susan **is looking** at the photos. (= **study**)
- The room **smells** of perfume. (= **have the smell**)
The cat **is smelling** its food. (= **sniff**)
- The towel **feels** soft. (= **have a soft texture**)
Jill **is feeling** her son's forehead. (= **touch**)
- He **is** selfish. (Character – permanent state)
He **is being** selfish. (behaviour – temporary situation)
- He **has** a sports car. (= **possess**)
He's **having** lunch. (= **eat – idiom**)

Put the verbs in brackets into the Present Simple or the Present Continuous.

- A: Do you know (you / know) that man over there?
B: Actually, I do. He's Muriel's husband.
- A: Are you doing anything tomorrow evening?
B: Yes. I (see) Jack at 9.
- A: I (see) you're feeling better.
B: Yes, I am. Thank you.
- A: What's that noise?
B: Well, I'm afraid that the people next door (have) a party.
- A: Sam (have) a new iPad.
B: I know. I've already seen it.
- A: This dress (not fit) me anymore.
B: What don't you buy a new one?
- A: Your perfume (smell) nice. What is it?
B: It's a new perfume called *Sunshine*.
- A: What is Jane doing?
B: She (smell) the roses in the garden.
- A: What (you / look) at?
B: Some pics I took during my holidays. They aren't very good, though.
- A: Hey, you (look) really pretty today.
B: Thank you. I've just had my hair cut.
- A: I (think) we are being followed.
B: Don't be silly! It's just your imagination.
- A: Is anything wrong?
B: No. I (just / think) about the party tonight.
- A: This fabric (feel) like silk.
B: Indeed it is silk, and it is very expensive.
- A: What are you doing?
B: I (feel) the radiator to see if it's getting warm.
- A: She (be) generous, isn't she?
B: Yes, she has never been a mean person.
- A: I'm sorry, but I (not understand) what you mean.
B: Shall I explain it again?
- A: The children are making lots of noise today.
B: I know, but they (have) fun.
- A: Tom (be) very quiet, isn't he?
B: Yes, I think he has some problems.
- A: Would you fancy some cherries?
B: Yes, please. I (love) cherries. They're my favourite fruit.
- A: This cake (taste) awful.
B: I think I forgot to put sugar in it!

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