



Normally, he isn't well behaved.

But today he's being very well behaved.

## Presentation

There are two types of main verbs: *dynamic* and *stative*.

### Dynamic verbs

You use dynamic verbs to talk about actions or events. You can use them to talk about facts/routines and actions that are in progress:

*I talk to my students individually once a term.* (= routine)

*Sorry, I'm talking to a student right now. Can we talk later?* (= action in progress)

### Stative verbs

You use **stative verbs** to talk about states. These include talking about existence (*be, exist*), beliefs and opinions (*know, think, understand*) and possession (*have got, belong*):

*I'm from England.* (= existence)

*I know what you mean.* (= belief)

*I've got one brother and two sisters.* (= possession)

Some stative verbs are only used in the present simple and *not* in the present continuous:

*Ask me. I know the answer!* (don't say *Ask me. I'm knowing the answer!*)

*Speak more slowly. I don't understand English very well.* (don't say *Speak more slowly. I'm not understanding English very well.*)

*You seem distracted today.* (don't say *You're seeming distracted today.*)

*This house belongs to my grandmother.* (don't say *This house is belonging to my grandmother.*)

*I don't believe you!* (don't say *I'm not believing you!*)

*I'm sorry but I don't agree with you.* (don't say *I'm sorry but I'm not agreeing with you.*)

You can use some stative verbs in both the present simple and the present continuous:

- in the present simple the verb describes a general state or situation:

*Normally, he isn't well behaved.* (= generally true)

*What do you think about the situation?* (= general opinion)

- in the present continuous the verb describes a temporary state or new situation:

*He's being very well behaved today.* (= temporary situation)

*I'm not sure. I'm thinking about it.* (= in progress)

### Changes in meaning

The meaning of some verbs can change because they can be both stative and dynamic, e.g. *have*:

Stative: *I have a shower.* (= I own a shower.)

Dynamic: *I'm having a shower.* (= I'm taking a shower at the moment.) *I have a shower every morning.* (= I take a shower every morning.)

Other verbs that can change their meaning include: *come, love, appear, see* and *weigh*.

**TIP** The rules for using dynamic and stative verbs with the present simple or present continuous are also true for other tenses in the simple or continuous forms.

## Exercises

## 1 Complete the sentences with A or B.

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1 I see my colleagues <u>B</u>        | A at the moment.                            |
| 2 I'm seeing my colleagues <u>A</u>   | B twice a week.                             |
| 3 I'm weighing _____                  | A the package.                              |
| 4 I weigh _____                       | B too much!                                 |
| 5 Jill and John come from _____       | A Canada via the USA.                       |
| 6 Jill and John are coming from _____ | B Canada – Ottawa to be exact.              |
| 7 I think _____                       | A about it.                                 |
| 8 One moment. I'm thinking _____      | B we should go.                             |
| 9 Mandy is being clever _____         | A by saving all the money from her new job. |
| 10 Mandy is clever _____              | B and always gets good grades.              |

2  Read this conversation. Find five more mistakes in the tourist's English. Then listen and check.

- Tourist: Hello. I'm trying to find Trafalgar Square but I'm <sup>don't know</sup> ~~not knowing~~ the way. Can you help me?
- Local person: Sure. It's easy from here. Go straight on and turn left at the large bookshop on the corner.
- Tourist: Sorry, I'm not understanding you. I'm not speaking English very well. Are you meaning straight up this road?
- Local person: That's right.
- Tourist: Thanks very much. Sorry for my English.
- Local person: No, it's very good.
- Tourist: Thank you, but I'm not believing you. I'm being in England for a month, so I hope it gets better.
- Local person: I'm sure it will.

## 3 Choose the correct form of the verbs.

- I believe / 'm believing you might be right about this answer.
- Give it back. It *belongs* / 's belonging to me.
- I *love* / 'm loving my new school. It's much better than my old one.
- I'm sorry but I *don't agree* / 'm not agreeing with you. I think you're wrong.
- The Queen *owns* / is owning most of the land around here.
- I *see* / 'm seeing what you mean.
- Matthew *sees* / is seeing someone about a new job. I hope he gets it.
- A: Why are your neighbours being so difficult about your plans to add a new floor to your house?  
B: I *have* / 'm having no idea. Jealousy, probably.

## 4 Write sentences that are true for you using both forms of the verbs.

- I love ..... . I'm loving .....
- I have ..... . I'm having .....
- I think ..... . I'm thinking .....