

# 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.

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 9.
3. A: I \_\_\_\_\_ (see) you're feeling better.  
B: Yes, I am. Thank you.
4. A: What's that noise?  
B: Well, I'm afraid that the people next door \_\_\_\_\_ (have) a party.
5. A: Sam \_\_\_\_\_ (have) a new iPad.  
B: I know. I've already seen it.
6. A: This dress \_\_\_\_\_ (not fit) me anymore.  
B: What 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 roses in the garden.
9. A: What \_\_\_\_\_ (you / look) at?  
B: Some pics I took during my holidays. They aren't very good, though.
10. A: Hey, you \_\_\_\_\_ (look) really pretty today.  
B: Thank you. I've just had my hair cut.
11. A: I \_\_\_\_\_ (think) we are 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: Indeed it is silk, and it is 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: I'm sorry, but I \_\_\_\_\_ (not understand) what you mean.  
B: Shall I explain it again?
17. A: The children are making lots of noise today.  
B: I know, but they \_\_\_\_\_ (have) fun.
18. A: Tom \_\_\_\_\_ (be) very quiet, isn't he?  
B: Yes, I think he has some problems.
19. A: Would you fancy some cherries?  
B: Yes, please. I \_\_\_\_\_ (love) cherries. They're my favourite fruit.
20. A: This cake \_\_\_\_\_ (taste) awful.  
B: I think I forgot to put sugar in it!

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