

Some verbs are only (or mostly) used in simple tenses, and are not used in continuous tenses. An example of a simple tense is the **present simple**, or the **past simple**. An example of a continuous tense is the **present continuous** or **past continuous**. These verbs are called **stative**, or state verbs. A verb which isn't stative is called a **dynamic verb**, and is usually an action. Often stative verbs are about liking or disliking something, or about a mental state, not about an action.

All verbs in English are classified as either stative or action verbs ('dynamic verbs'). **Action verbs** describe actions we take (things we do) or things that happen. **Stative verbs** refer to the way things 'are' - their appearance, state of being, smell, etc.

The most important difference between stative and action verbs is that action verbs can be used in continuous tenses and stative verbs can not be used in continuous tenses.

For example:

Action Verbs

She's studying math with Tom at the moment. AND She studies math with Tom every Friday.

They've been working since seven o'clock this morning. AND They worked for two hours yesterday afternoon.

We'll be having a meeting when you arrive. AND We are going to meet next Friday.

Stative Verbs

The flowers smell lovely. NOT Those flowers are smelling lovely.

She heard him speak in Seattle yesterday afternoon. NOT She was hearing him speak in Seattle yesterday afternoon.

They'll love the concert tomorrow evening. NOT They'll be loving the concert tomorrow evening.

Common Stative Verbs

Generally, stative verbs fall into four groups:

Verbs Showing Thought or Opinions	Verbs Showing Senses	Verbs Showing Possession	Verbs Showing Emotion
know	hear	have	love
believe	smell	own	hate
understand	see	belong	want
recognize	feel	possess	need

Some verbs can be both stative and dynamic (with a slight change of meaning):

be	be is usually a stative verb, but when it is used in the continuous it means 'behaving' or 'acting'	<i>You are stupid. = it's part of your personality</i>
		<i>You are being stupid. = only now, not usually</i>
have	have (stative) = own	<i>I have a car.</i>
	have (dynamic) = part of an expression	<i>I'm having a party / a picnic / a bath / a good time / a break</i>
see	see (stative) = see with your eyes / understand	<i>I see what you mean.</i> <i>I see her now, she's just coming along the road.</i>
	see (dynamic) = meet / have a relationship with	<i>I've been seeing my boyfriend for three years.</i> <i>I'm seeing Robert tomorrow.</i>
taste (also: smell, feel, look)	taste (stative) = has a certain taste	<i>This soup tastes great.</i>
	taste (dynamic) = the action of tasting	<i>The chef is tasting the soup.</i>
think	think (stative) = have an opinion	<i>I think that coffee is great.</i>
	think (dynamic) = consider, have in my head	<i>what are you thinking about? I'm thinking about my next holiday.</i>