

State verbs and action verbs

Action verbs describe things we do or things that happen. We use **state verbs** to talk about attitudes, thoughts, senses or belonging. Sometimes, state verbs can also describe actions. Most state verbs are not used in the continuous (-ing) form.

Action verbs can be used in all tenses. **State verbs** can not be used in continuous forms.

The new phone weighed 120g.	NOT: The new phone was weighing 120g.
John has a new laptop.	NOT: John is having a new laptop.
My brother likes programming.	NOT: My brother is liking programming.
Ms. Roberts owns two startups.	NOT: Ms. Roberts is owning two startups.
Mr. Thomas belongs to a computing club.	NOT: Mr. Thomas is belonging to a computing club.

Here are some common state verbs:

prefer	remember	cost	appear	know	matter	resemble
fit	hate	doubt	believe	mean	suppose	hear
have	like	exist	sound	wish	own	love
consider	consist	understand	think	weigh(have weight)	seem	contain
need	owe	want	belong	agree	involve	depend

Verbs with two meanings

Some state verbs can be used in the continuous form to talk about a temporary action or an action happening in the present. However, some state verbs can be used as action verbs in the present continuous form with a change of meaning. Here are some examples:

She looks healthy. (her appearance now)	I was looking out the window at the snow. (watching the snow falling).
Does Peter have a computer? (own)	They are having dinner with their family today. (eating)
I don't hear the music playing. (hear with my ears)	Our tutor will be hearing our presentation today. (will be listening to)
They feel that we were rude. (think)	How has your sister-in-law been feeling ? (how is her health)

That perfume **smells** good. (has a good scent)

He **is smelling** the flowers. (sniffing at)

The new machine **weighs** 3 kg. (its weight is 3 kg)

The woman **is weighing** the vegetables. (measuring their weight)

They **are** good coders. (it's a fact)

They are **being** unreasonable. (behaving in an unreasonable way)

Informal English

In **very informal English**, the continuous form is sometimes used with state verbs. Twitter posts, Instagram posts, an advertisement that says, '**I'm loving it**' etc. You might also hear someone say, '**I'm hating this movie.**' The **-ing** form of the verbs in these examples have a sense of being temporary.

(Right now) I **'m hating** this lesson on state verbs. 😊

(General opinion) I **like** the movie I saw last week.