

STATE AND ACTIVITY VERBS



There are two kinds of verbs in English:

Activity verbs –

describe activities
and they can be used
in **simple** and
continuous tenses.

walk , talk, eat, drink...

□ State verbs –

describe states and
can only be used in
simple tenses. They
can't be used in
continuous tenses.

hate, understand,
want...

State verbs:

- **Verbs related to activities of the mind:**

admit, agree, believe, know, mean, prefer,
realise, remember, think, understand, want

- **Verbs related to emotions:**

adore, care, like, dislike, love, hate, hope

- **Having or being:**

appear, be, belong, contain, have, include, need,
seem, possess, own


- **Verbs related to senses:**

feel, hear, look, see, smell, sound, taste...

Some state verbs can also refer to an activity. In this meaning they can be used in a continuous tense.


□ **HAVE**

We have a second-hand car. (have = it's my car  state)

We are having some tea. (have = drink  activity)

□ **THINK**

I think it's a great idea. (think = my opinion  state)

I'm thinking about my exam. (think = a process of my thoughts  activity)

Verbs related to senses can refer to actions, not a physical ability or sense.

- The coffee **smells great**.
- Martha **is smelling** the roses in her garden.
- You **look nice**.
- I **am looking** at you and smiling.
- That soup **tastes awful**.
- The experts **are tasting** French wines today.

Most state verbs can be used in continuous tenses as an exception, to express strong positive or negative emotions

- **I'm loving** it! = "I REALLY love it"
- **She is hating** the way he speaks to waiters, it is so rude! = "She hates is VERY MUCH"

Remember that these cases are **ONLY**
EXCEPTIONS!