

# STATIVE VERBS

All verbs in English are classified as either stative or action verbs (also referred to as '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**

know  
believe  
understand  
recognize

### **Verbs Showing Possession**

have  
own  
belong  
possess

### **Verbs Showing Senses**

hear  
smell  
see  
feel

## Verbs Showing Emotion

love  
hate  
want  
need

You may notice that some of these verbs can be used as action verbs with different meanings. For example, the verb 'to think' can either express an opinion, or the process of considering. In the first case, when 'think' expresses an opinion it is stative:

*I think she should work harder on her maths.*  
*She thinks he is a fantastic singer.*

'Think', however, can also express the process of considering something. In this case 'think' is an action verb:

*They're thinking about buying a new house.*  
*She's thinking of joining a health club*