

# 25 State verbs



Oh, really? They're interesting, but very strange. I don't understand what they mean at all.

## 1 State verbs *believe, have, like, etc.*

There are a number of state verbs in English; we rarely use them in a continuous tense:

**X** *The solicitor is doubting the credibility of his client's explanation.*

**✓** *The solicitor doubts the credibility of his client's explanation.*

They often describe states of being, thinking, possessing or feeling:

existing or being	<i>be consist of contain exist</i>
possessing	<i>belong to have (= own) include lack own possess</i>
feeling or wanting	<i>adore desire despise detest dislike envy hate like love need pity prefer trust want wish</i>
thinking or believing	<i>believe doubt expect feel (= think) forget imagine intend know realise recognise remember see (= understand) suppose think understand</i>
appearance	<i>appear resemble seem</i>
other verbs	<i>concern cost depend deserve fit matter mean measure mind weigh</i>

## 2 Using these verbs in the continuous

It is possible to use many of the above verbs in the continuous, but the verb either has a different meaning or expresses a temporary action:

*'Is Maria ready yet?' 'No, she's **having** a shower.'* (= is taking)

*Santos **is thinking of** getting a new Internet connection.* (= is considering now)

Here are some of the common differences in use:

VERB	USE IN SIMPLE	USE IN CONTINUOUS
<i>be</i>	<i>Your son <b>was</b> a very obedient child, wasn't he?</i>	<i>Your son <b>was being</b> very difficult at the weekend; that wasn't like him.</i> (= was behaving)
<i>have</i>	<i>They're very rich. They <b>have</b> three homes and a yacht.</i> (= own)	<i>I'm <b>having</b> a really good time, thanks.</i> (= am experiencing)
<i>think</i>	<i>I've <b>always thought</b> that we'd meet again.</i> (= have believed)	<i>I've <b>been thinking of</b> contributing to Oxfam.</i> (= have been considering)
<i>mean</i>	<i>The sign <b>means</b> 'slow down'.</i>	<i>You're <b>always meaning</b> to call, but you never do.</i> (= are intending)
<i>appear</i>	<i>It <b>appears</b> the police haven't started the investigation.</i> (= seems)	<i>The Philharmonic <b>are appearing</b> at the Palladium.</i> (= are performing)
<i>weigh</i>	<i>She <b>weighs</b> 70 kilos.</i> (= her weight is)	<i>I'm <b>weighing</b> the ingredients for the cake.</i> (= action of weighing)