

## Stative verbs



In this popular slogan McDonald's promotes fast-food. It has become famous all over the world, but is it grammatically correct? The answer is **no**! Why? Because the verb to love is a stative verb which should not be used in the present continuous!

The opposite of stative verbs are dynamic verbs, they are **fine** to use like the McDonald's slogan, eg: "I'm running some errands" or "I will be walking all day". So what is a stative verb?

- 1) Verbs that show thought or opinion, such as "know" and "recognize"
- 2) Verbs that show possession, such as "own" and "belong"
- 3) Verbs that show emotion, such as "love" and "need"
- 4) Verbs that show senses, such as "feel" and "see"

This is important in ensuring that your English sounds natural. Whilst you may think that it is fine to say "I am owning a dog" or "I am seeing the painting" to native English speakers this sounds very odd.

### Exceptions

Of course there are always exceptions. Some verbs are both dynamic and stative such as the verb "to be". "To be" can be used in the continuous to mean "to behave" eg: "You are all being naughty today!" But we can also use "to be" as a stative verb, eg: "He is a Spaniard" as you cannot say that "He is being a Spaniard".

Another example is the verb to "Think", eg: "I think that this is beautiful" is stative but "I am thinking about going on vacation" is dynamic. What do you think is the difference in these meanings?

### Conclusion

McDonalds is not the best place to find out about English grammar! Remember that native speakers can be rather imaginative with what is acceptable to say and what is not so whilst the phrase "I'm loving it" may now have entered the English language it is not correct! Use this as an example to remember what a stative verb is so that your English sounds flawless in the future!

Which of these sentences use the progressive tense? Can you state whether it's present, past, or future progressive?

- A. James is helping Andrew.
- B. James helps Andrew.

- A. The children were annoying James and Andrew.
- B. The children annoyed James and Andrew.

- A. Sir Fragalot will shout sentence fragments from the rooftop.
- B. Sir Fragalot will be shouting sentence fragments from the rooftop.

- A. The team was winning the race.
- B. The team won the race.

- A. The chess club will be moving the tables.
- B. The chess club will move the tables.

- A. The students laugh at these sentences.
- B. The students are laughing at these sentences.

Do these sentences use stative verbs or dynamic verbs?

- I recognize you.
- I ran home.
- I own that car.
- I feel happy.
- I sang the song.
- I need chocolate.
- I helped James.
- I hovered over the puddle.

Which of these sentences use the progressive tense? Can you state whether it's present, past, or future progressive?

A. James is helping Andrew.

B. James helps Andrew.

[Answer: A. Present progressive]

A. The children were annoying James and Andrew.

B. The children annoyed James and Andrew.

[Answer: A. Past progressive]

A. Sir Fragalot will shout sentence fragments from the rooftop.

B. Sir Fragalot will be shouting sentence fragments from the rooftop.

[Answer: B. Future progressive.]

A. The team was winning the race.

B. The team won the race.

[Answer: A. Past progressive]

A. The chess club will be moving the tables.

B. The chess club will move the tables.

[Answer: A. Future progressive.]

A. The students laugh at these sentences.

B. The students are laughing at these sentences.

[Answer: B. Present progressive]

Do these sentences use stative verbs or dynamic verbs?

I recognize you. [Stative]

I ran home. [Dynamic]

I own that car. [Stative]

I feel happy. [Stative]

I sang the song. [Dynamic]

I need chocolate. [Stative]

I helped James. [Dynamic]

I hovered over the puddle. [Dynamic]