Some points about action and state verbs

In a sense we can divide verbs into two categories: action verbs and state verbs.

Action verbs are those that describe an action. They can be used in simple and progressive

forms. Verbs such as *play*, *watch*, *work*, *do*, *practice*, *etc* are action verbs. They can be

used in all tenses. On the other hand, state verbs have stative meanings. They describe

states, conditions, or situations that exist rather than actions. When verbs have stative

meanings, they are usually not used in progressive tenses.

State verbs can be classified into different categories.

1. **Mental state** include *know, realize, understand, recognize, believe, feel, suppose, think,*

*imagine, doubt, remember, forget, want, need, desire, and mean*

2. **Emotional state** include verbs such as *love, like , appreciate, please, prefer, hate,*

*dislike, fear, envy, mind, care, astonish, amaze, and surprise*

3. **Possessive verbs** like *possess, have, own and belong.*

4. **Sense perception** verbs such as *taste, smell, hear, feel, see*.

5. **Other existing states** include *seem, look, appear, sound, resemble, look like, cost, own*

*weigh, equal, be, exist, matter, consist of, contain, and include*.

But there are some verbs that can be used in both state and progressive meanings and uses.

These verbs are *think, imagine, doubt, remember, forget, want, desire, mean, have, taste,*

*smell, feel, see, look, appear, cost, weigh, be, include .*

Some example sentences are:

1. These flowers *smell* good. (state)

2. She *is smelling* the flowers. ( action)

3. I *think* he is a good man. (state)

4. I *am thinking* about changing my major. (action)

5. I *see* a butterfly. (state)

6. Jane *is seeing* a doctor about her headache. (action)

7. The food *tastes* good. I like it very much. (state)

8. My mother *is tasting* the food. (action)

9. Mina *doesn’t feel* good today. (state)

10. She *is feeling* the cat’s fur. (action)

11. I *have* blue eyes. (state)

12. She *is having* a good time at the park. (action)

13. I can’t move this suitcase. It *weighs* too much. (state)

14. The grocer *is weighing* the rice. (action)

15. I *remember* his first name. (state)

16. Sara is looking at an old picture album. She *is remembering* the wonderful days of her childhood. (action)

17. *Forget* yourself and think of someone else for a change. (state)

18. I *was forgetting* that David used to teach us. (action)

19. These chairs *cost* 40 $ each. (state)

20. All this *is costing* me a great deal of time. (action)

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