Views from Edinburgh
Language Work
Stative Verbs

Look at the beginning of the poem 'Dusting the Phone'

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I am spending my time imagining the worst that could happen.
I know this is not a good idea, and that being in love, I could be spending my time going over the best that has been happening.
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Most of the main verbs are talking about what the poet is doing over a period of time. Underline them. Note that the majority are in the continuous (or progressive) form. Which three letters make this clear?

However, one main verb refers to a state rather than an action or event. Underline this verb.

It would be wrong to say 'I am knowing' in British English. The verb 'to know' does not take the '-ing' form except in certain cases.

These kind of verbs are known as **stative** verbs because they describe a state. Verbs that take the '-ing' form are known as **dynamic** verbs.

A

Here is a list of verbs. Decide if they are stative or dynamic and put them in the appropriate column.

- Like
- Spend
- Know
- Love
- Happen
- Prefer
- Climb
- Pay
- Want
- Wish
- Buy
- Dislike
- See
- Hate
- Talk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stative</th>
<th>Dynamic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know</td>
<td>Happen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, to make things more difficult, some verbs can take both forms, but change meaning when they do! Consider the difference between the meaning of the verbs in these pairs of sentences:

1 a  What was she thinking about when did that?
    b  She thinks he’s clever.

2 a  They feel we should leave soon.
    b  I’m not feeling too well

3 a  He’s busy measuring the circumference.
    b  That small box measures 10 x 20 cms

4 a  I can’t see what you mean.
    b  He has been seeing Jane for a month.

C

Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct form of the verb. (In each case, only one will fit)

1. I ___________ having to get up early.  (dislike)
2. She ___________ to leave now.  (want)
3. The film festival ___________ for two years now (happen)
4. He was ___________ that you didn’t know the answer. (astonish)
5. She ___________ less round her waist than her sister. (measure)
6. They ___________ he was lying. (know)
7. I ___________ the Doctor this afternoon (see)
8. While Jim ___________

    the bill, Sarah put on her coat. (pay)
9. He ___________ fish to meat. (prefer)
10. He ___________ they had underestimated the cost of the project. (feel)
This section provides a brief mono-lingual glossary of key vocabulary and cultural references from these poems. The meanings are specific to the context, and may mean something else in another context.

### I Try My Absolute Best

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>alar</td>
<td>chemical in pesticide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apparently</td>
<td>seemingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>benzene</td>
<td>liquid that comes from petroleum and coal tar</td>
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<tr>
<td>carcinogenic</td>
<td>causes cancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cartridge</td>
<td>part of the water purifier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chock-a-block</td>
<td>full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deposit</td>
<td>layer of something left behind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flush</td>
<td>well off, rich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hype up</td>
<td>make excited and agitated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monster Munch</td>
<td>children’s snack of crisps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organic</td>
<td>grown without any harmful pesticides or chemicals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perrier</td>
<td>mineral water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pipe down</td>
<td>make calm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purifier</td>
<td>device for making water pure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>off the breast</td>
<td>no longer drinking the mother’s milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valium</td>
<td>drug that makes someone feel calm and unstressed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Attention Seeking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>detention</td>
<td>punishment where children stay after school to do extra work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gerbil</td>
<td>small rodent kept as a pet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mess up</td>
<td>make untidy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>punishment</td>
<td>penalty for doing something wrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>swot</td>
<td>(negative) someone who studies very hard, seriously and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>enthusiastically</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sassenachs

bru  *Irn Bru* is a bright orange fizzy drink first made in 1901 in Scotland. It is said to cure hangovers. Advertising slogan: “Made in Scotland. From *girders.*” (*girders* are heavy iron bars)

clutch  hold tightly

Euston  railway station in north London where trains arrive from Scotland

jig  fidget (a quick, lively dance)

pony  *Ponytail.* (Long hair tied into a “tail”)

Sassenach  the Scottish people of today call the English “Sassenach”, as a usually friendly term of abuse for the ancient “enemy”.

sophisticated  showing

tammy  *(or Tam-o-shanter)* is a hat, resembling a beret. It can be worn by men or women.

tartan  a pattern or design of interlocking lines which has made Scotland world-famous

Dusting the Phone

assault  unexpected violent attack

herald  announce the arrival of

hoax  trick played on someone to deceive them

infuriatingly  making someone very, very angry

silver service  high quality service by well trained professionals (usually from waiters in a good restaurant)

siren  loud warning noise, eg from an ambulance

trapped  unable to escape