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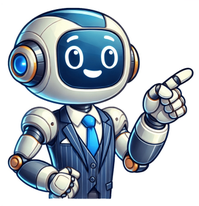

The verb 'wear' can be in the progressive as in She's wearing jeans, which is to be distinguished from She wears jeans. So it seems that it is a dynamic verb. But 'wear' is not so dynamic as 'put on' as in She put on jeans in that she doesn't really move any part of her body in order to 'wear' her jeans. So I wonder what's so "dynamic" about this usage of the verb 'wear'. Most dictionaries define 'wear' as 'to have something on your body'. But the 'have' there cannot be in the progressive. (*She's having jeans on.) Assuming that 'wear' is a dynamic verb, how can you define it with a stative verb (have)?? It is dynamic for me. You put the garment on and "carry" it around on your back, then you take it off. All of that it implied in the verb 'wear'. JungKim, as I'm sure I've said before, "stative" and "dynamic" have never seemed to me to be particularly helpful labels. To my mind, it would be better - rather than tying yourself into knots over the meaning of "stative"/"dynamic" - to focus on the fact that "wear" can be used in the continuous tenses as well as the simple tenses. Loob, thanks for your comment. Let's not talk about the dichotomy. If we were to group the English verbs into two, the first including verbs that can be made in the continuous and the second including the rest, "wear" would belong in the first group whereas "have" as in the definition of "wear" would in the second. Does that make any sense to you? If not, do you think that the definition should have used some other verb like "carry" as suggested by boozer instead of "have" in the first place? Let's not talk about the dichotomy. If we were to group the English verbs into two ... Does that make any sense to you? Sounds like a dichotomy to me I am not having an easy time of understanding your point. "Wear" may not fit neatly into the stative/dynamic categories but there is nothing wrong with using a definition containing "have" to describe the meaning of "wear". A definition is intended to help you explain what a word means. It is not intended to serve as an exact equivalent that can mindlessly be swapped into any sentence where the word appears. Well, I said "the" dichotomy, which refers to the dichotomy between the dynamic and stative verbs, since Loob seems to have qualms about "the" dichotomy, not just any dichotomy. My point was the same as Loob's - setting up any dichotomy with absolute divisions is an unwise approach in many aspects of English - you just chose a different one for your response Have can be made into "having" in some situations, like in my post, but not in all situations, and my post was intended to be an example of the softness of your new "dichotomy". I am not having an easy time of understanding your point. "Wear" may not fit neatly into the stative/dynamic categories but there is nothing wrong with using a definition containing "have" to describe the meaning of "wear". A definition is intended to help you explain what a word means. It is not intended to serve as an exact equivalent that can mindlessly be swapped into any sentence where the word appears. I'm not in the dictionary making business, so I have no idea what's the standard. But speaking from the perspective of an ESL person, this "loose" definition might well have caused quite a lot of confusion among ESL students. Hi, my first post, and I was thinking along the lines of JungKim. I teach English in Japan, where the grammar problems regarding English will be similar. While I can't answer the technical question regarding stative/dynamic (I had the same question, and I fear this thread has lost its ... thread ... sorry. All tied up in technicalities. Sorry again.) I would say that 'wear' or 'be wearing' definitely do not relate to an action. e.g. "What are you doing?" "I'm wearing a sweater." "Wear" is more like a state in normal use. However, 'to put (something) on' is an action; it is the opposite of the verb 'to take (sthg) off.' In Japanese (Korean, too?) there are no two distinct verbs for this. Is that any help? Want more confusion? This can be compared with 'get on' a train/bus, 'be on' or 'ride' and 'get off.' Action - state ("I am on the train.") - action. Also with, 'go to sleep, 'sleep' and 'wake up.' (though the last one is debatable, since 'He's sleeping' could answer the question, 'What's he doing?' I would say that 'wear' or 'be wearing' definitely do not relate to an action. e.g. "What are you doing?" "I'm wearing a sweater." "Wear" is more like a state in normal use. However, 'to put (something) on' is an action; it is the opposite of the verb 'to take (sthg) off.' In Japanese (Korean, too?) there are no two distinct verbs for this. Is that any help? Welcome, dr. nic. Not to revive this thread, but I'm sorry I can't agree 100% with your statement that you can answer "I'm wearing a sweater" to the question "What are you doing?". To my non-native ears, somehow the answer sounds awkward. I don't know why. I'd expect a different answer to the same question: "I'm putting on a sweater," which is a completely different thing from "I'm wearing a sweater". Am I mistaken? To my non-native ears, somehow the answer sounds awkward. I don't know why. I'd expect a different answer to the same question: "I'm putting on a sweater," which is a completely different thing from "I'm wearing a sweater". To my native ears, it sounds an extremely odd response to the question "What are you doing?" It works as an answer to "What are you wearing?", but otherwise I'd have expected something more along the lines of "I'm putting on a sweater" or simply "I'm getting dressed". Oops! OK, Guys. I had intended that to be a BAD example, following the previous comment , quoting myself, "I would say that 'wear' or 'be wearing' definitely do not relate to an action." And therefore I entirely agree with you both. I will try to be a bit clearer next time. And, JungKim, it was my hope that you WOULD revive the thread, so I'm glad you responded. So, would it make more sense to say It isn’t cold today. That’s why I didn’t put on a sweater. than It isn’t cold today. That’s why I didn’t wear a sweater. ? So, would it make more sense to say It isn’t cold today. That’s why I didn’t put on a sweater. than It isn’t cold today. That’s why I didn’t wear a sweater. Both sentences sound normal to me, but put on better expresses the notion that putting on a piece of clothing is a dynamic process.* If you wanted to use wear, it might be a good idea to change tenses: ... That's why I'm not wearing a sweater. *I must confess that I never knew about or distinguished between dynamic and stative verbs until I joined the forum, learned that the distinction existed and learned that it was important to some people. Last edited: Nov 14, 2023 Yes, they're both normal, but the first one is a little more evocative of the moment when you were picking out what to wear. I put on a sweater, but then I decided not to wear it. I wore a sweater, but then I decided not to wear it. I have been preparing a class on action (dynamic) verbs and state (stative) verbs today, and which can or cannot be used with continuous tenses and with 'used to' and 'would' (meaning past habits). This has thrown up an interesting point with the verb 'to live'. We CAN say "I used to live in London" and "I lived in London" but we cannot say "I would live in London". It was a past state or habit, not an action. So from the point of view of 'used to' and 'would', 'to live' is a state verb. However, we can use 'to live' with a continuous tense, e.g. "I was living in London when the Twin Towers were attacked." "Where are you living now?" With verbs of the senses and mental states such as 'to see', 'to think' they can be both state and action, depending on the context. "I see what you mean" vs "I am seeing his teacher tomorrow" & "I think she will win" vs "I am thinking about what to cook for dinner". It feels as if 'to live' should belong in this class of verbs but I cannot for the life of me think of a convincing explanation for this. I could just say "That's the way it is!" but I'd rather not, if there is a better explanation. There's a handy list : Geoffrey Leach and colleagues group the four types this way: "(a) Perception and sensation (e.g. see, hear, smell, hurt, taste)... (b) Cognition, emotion, attitude (e.g. think, feel, forget, long, remember)... (c) Having and being (e.g. be, have, have to, cost, require)... (d) Stance (e.g. sit, stand, lie, live, face)" (Geoffrey Leech, Marianne Hundt, Christian Mair, and Nicholas Smith, "Change in Contemporary English: A Grammatical Study." Cambridge University Press, 2012) Norquist points out there are gray areas depending on context. 'ing' forms turn up in ads, for example. "I'm loving it." {MacDonalds} What Are Stative Verbs in English? === I don't think the tests you mention-- 'used to' and 'would'(for past)-- are reliable. Example, "I used to think that a tomato was a fruit." Further they presuppose that the person has a 'feel' for English. Learners often don't. "I want to discuss about my grade." === Last edited: Sep 14, 2021 I don't think this is going to help much, but I'd say there are situations when you can say "I would live". For example: Whenever I really fancied a man, I would live with him for a few weeks and see how I felt after that. You might find this previous thread helpful, SoundsFamiliar: live-stative verb?. There's a handy list : Geoffrey Leach and colleagues group the four types this way: (Geoffrey Leech, Marianne Hundt, Christian Mair, and Nicholas Smith, "Change in Contemporary English: A Grammatical Study." Cambridge University Press, 2012) Norquist points out there are gray areas depending on context. 'ing' forms turn up in ads, for example. "I'm loving it." {MacDonalds} What Are Stative Verbs in English? === I don't think the tests you mention-- 'used to' and 'would'(for past)-- are reliable. Example, "I used to think that a tomato was a fruit." Further they presuppose that the person has a 'feel' for English. Learners often don't. "I want to discuss about my grade." "Think" is one of those verbs which definitely can be static or dynamic - "I think it is a good idea" (have an opinion) vs "I am thinking of having a party" (actively considering). That's why we can say "I would think about him every day." (past habit) because in this context 'think' is used in the 'actively considering' sense, not the 'opinion' sense. 'Used to' can of course be used for both static and dynamic verbs, so the problem is rather with 'would'. "I would think that a tomato was a fruit" sounds wrong. "I would think that a tomato is a fruit" is OK because would is being used there in the conditional sense of asserting a fact you believe to be true in the present, but aren't 100% certain. You do not explicitly say, but can I assume that your 'handy list' is one of verbs which can be both static and dynamic? Many of them seem to be. Regarding the MacDonalds advertising campaign, I strongly suspect that the advertising agency used the slogan "I'm loving it" precisely because it sounded a little bit odd, so it would attract people's attention. There's also the old song lyric "I'll be loving you, always", which fits the metre better and also makes the act of loving sound more dynamic. I never presuppose that a learner has a 'feel' for English, and especially with anything other than advanced learners it is often better to give a simple rule, even when you know of lots of exceptions, but with some students "that's just the way it is" cuts no ice. Well, as a learner, I was taught that many verbs, including "think", "see" and some other ones, behave differently depending on which of their meanings we are using. Thus, "I think that's true" - 'think' is stative, as it always is when meaning "have an opinion", while "I'm thinking of going there" - 'think' is dinamic, as it always is when meaning "use your mind to decide about something". In other words, it's easier to treat "think" here as a separate verb for each meaning. I can't think of anything good with regard to "live", though. I don't think this is going to help much, but I'd say there are situations when you can say "I would live". For example: Whenever I really fancied a man, I would live with him for a few weeks and see how I felt after that. You might find this previous thread helpful, SoundsFamiliar: live-stative verb?. I don't think this is going to help much, but I'd say there are situations when you can say "I would live". For example: Whenever I really fancied a man, I would live with him for a few weeks and see how I felt after that. You might find this previous thread helpful, SoundsFamiliar: live-stative verb?. I think I see light at the end of this particular tunnel. It hangs on the 2 different meanings of the word 'live' in English, being (1) to reside and (2) to be alive. So, "I am living in London" = "I reside in London" or in French "J'habite à Londres" whereas "When I stacked shelves for a living I would live for my Saturday nights" = "Saturday nights were my reason to stay alive" or in French, my 'raison d'être' or 'raison de vivre'. Your example "I would live with him for a few weeks" also works because it means "I would share my life with him" on a temporary basis. Last edited: Sep 14, 2021 Hi I want to know what "change the dynamic" means here. I checked the dictionary and I could not understand the meaning. “I knew that if I wanted 2016 to be different, I was going to have to try to change the dynamic and establish a more open and constructive give-and-take.” Source: Hillary Rodham Clinton. “What Happened.” In modern AE, "dynamic" is sometimes used as a noun. It is used about groups of people. Originally the term was the plural "group dynamics": the set of forces and interactions that exist in a group of people, and affect how they behave. That term started being used around 1950, and is common in books about society, and books about the psychology of groups. In recent years, the singular "a dynamic" started being used with the same meaning. In theory the singular implies one single force or behavior, but in most sentences "the dynamic" and "the dynamics" mean the same thing. We say "the dynamic(s) of a group", where it may be any group. In Ms. Clinton's quote above, "to change the dynamic" means to change how people (voters and Dem. politicians) interact and respond to each other. The rest of the sentence gives one example of the kind of changes she means: establishing a more open and constructive "give-and-take" (two-way conversation) between herself (and other Dem politicians) and voters. Hi, I'm slightly confused about the stativity/dynamism status of remain. It seems clear to my non-native ear that it at least passes the most basic stativity test, i.e. can be used in the simple present to denote an ongoing state (Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 119): (1) He remains in prison. (2) They remain married. These both sound fine to me, suggesting stativity. Agreeable? Puzzlingly, Jackendoff seems to reject the simple-present use of this verb in its locative sense. He (1990: 172) accepts (3) but rejects (4): (3) Bill is remaining on the floor. (4) Bill remains on the floor. To me, (4) sounds better than (3), although both sound rather awkward, probably because of the somewhat implausible location. If we change on the floor to in the garage, then the simple-present version sounds impeccable to me while the progressive version is still somewhat awkward, albeit improved. What do native speakers think? On another note, it seems to me that whatever their ultimate status turns out to be, the complex-intransitive ('copular') use of this verb tends more towards stativity than its locative use. An arguably more reliable diagnostic for the stative/dynamic distinction than the simple present test is Jackendoff's eventivity test (1976: 100): if the clause can be felicitously prefixed by What happened was that ... then it's dynamic. Thus I inquire: do the following "event descriptions" sound acceptable to native speakers? (5) What happened was that he remained physically active. (6) What happened was that they remained happily married. (7) What happened was that he remained an American citizen. (8) What happened was that the amount of libel damages remained undisclosed. If these are fully felicitous, then surely the verb is dynamic rather than stative. Thanks in advance! Huddleston, Rodney and Geoffrey K. Pullum. The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language. Cambridge University Press. Jackendoff, Ray S. Semantics and Cognition. "Toward an explanatory semantic representation". MIT Press. Jackendoff, Ray S. "Toward an explanatory semantic representation". Linguistic Inquiry 7, pp. 89-150. Last edited: Aug 20, 2021 To me, (4) sounds better than (3) It does to me, too. There are quite a lot of stative verbs that take on aspects of dynamic verbs in some situations, but I cannot think how "remain" can describe an action. (5), (6) and (7) appear to describe a state following some previously-described event. Thanks. What about (8), which was added just now because all the others had animate subjects? It seems much the same to me. There is no action; things remained as they had been previously. Remain is commonly used in the continuous form with future reference. I am/will be remaining here for two months now. Does this means it is dynamic in this case? I have seen so many different definitions of stative that I am thoroughly confused about the subject. I will be liking walking in the park with you. Last edited: Aug 20, 2021 Thanks to both of you! What I gather from those comments is that there's indeed a difference in the degree of dynamism/stativity exhibited by the copular and locative uses of remain. The latter is more dynamic than the former. This accords with Quirk et al , who suggest that dynamism/stativity is gradient rather than binary, with verbs of stance/location somewhere in the middle (1985: 206), and 'current copular verbs' described as being "normally" stative (1985: 1172) Does this means it is dynamic in this case? Yes, according to all criteria I'm aware of. There's another test that might help clarify the status of this verb (Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 119). IF a clause is stative, it can serve as the surrounding temporal frame for a punctual event, as in: She was at her desk when the doorbell rang. ^ Her being at her desk extends temporally from before to (at least a moment) after the sound of the bell. Can remain function this way? Let us please hear native-speaker judgments/analyses of the following: (9) She remained in bed when I returned. (10) She remained asleep when I returned. Do these remain-clauses felicitously provide surrounding temporal frames for the next clause, or do they do something else? Quirk, Randolph, Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech, and Jan Svartvik. 1985. A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language. Longman. (9) She remained in bed when I returned. (10) She remained asleep when I returned. These sound odd to me, but I think they might make sense in the following meaning: (11) She remained in bed even after I returned. (12) She remained asleep even after I returned. Not “surrounding”, then Thanks se16teddy! Your judgments suggest that whatever remain is, it is not a prototypical stative verb in either of the two senses. Apparently these two uses of remain are paraphrasable as 'continue to be X for a non-zero duration', where X is either a property or a location. The key aspectual element here is continue. This differs from pure state verbs, which have been analyzed as involving be or have as a core aspectual element: Jim resembles (≈ is like) his sister, The can holds (≈ has a capacity of) two gallons, etc (Quirk et al 1985: 205). Semantically, in these two uses, remain seems to me very similar to (perhaps even a synonym of) the verb stay, which is uncontroversially dynamic. Unlike stay, however, remain behaves like a true stative in the simple present tense: (13) Bill remains in the garage. (14) Bill stays in the garage. To me, (13) is impeccable as a description of Bill's continuing present location, which is a state. Or isn't it? At least it exhibits the syntactic behavior of stative clauses: it fails to acquire a habitual interpretation the way dynamic verbs normally do in the simple present. Instead, it describes an ongoing, continuing situation. This contrasts sharply with (14), which does acquire a habitual interpretation like any dynamic verb the simple present -- at least for me, (14) describes a recurrent pattern, similar to Bill generally stays out of my way. But in the two other tests, remain behaves like a dynamic verb: se16teddy rejects (9) and (10) above, Uncle Jack didn't object to (5)-(8) above, and Jackendoff (1976: 102) accepts both of the following: (15) What happened was that the poor coach stayed a pumpkin. (16) What happened was that the metal remained red. This is pretty strange hybrid behavior. Jackendoff, Ray S. 1976. "Toward an explanatory semantic representation". Linguistic Inquiry 7, pp. 89-150. stay, which is uncontroversially dynamic. When stay means abide it is dynamic. When it means continue to be doesn’t it work the same as remain? (Your post above is rather long so you might have said this already.) When stay means abide it is dynamic. Abide itself is polysemous, and I'm not sure which sense of it you mean. But when I said stay was dynamic, I was referring only to the two senses glossable as 'remain at a location' and 'retain a property/status' respectively. When it means continue to be doesn’t it work the same as remain? Not unless I'm mistaken. To me, Jim stays in the garage reports either Jim's habitual behavior or his place of residence, but does not describe his location at the time of utterance like Jim remains in the garage does. But I could be mistaken. That's why I'm soliciting native-speaker judgments. EDIT: I guess by abide you mean 'stick to a place / with a person' (the locative sense), and I would certainly agree that this is dynamic. But I have a hard time coming up with an example of stay in the simple present where it reports an ongoing situation, rather than something habitual. Last edited: Aug 21, 2021 Not unless I'm mistaken. To me, Jim stays in the garage reports either Jim's habitual behavior or his place of residence, but does not describe his location at the time of utterance like Jim remains in the garage does. Neither sentence obviously refers to where Jim is at the time of utterance. Both sentences could describe what he will do in a specific situation in the future. Neither sentence obviously refers to where Jim is at the time of utterance. Both sentences could describe what he will do in a specific situation in the future. You mean the kind of scenario where arrangements have been made beforehand for Jim to live in the garage during some scheduled period? And are both versions synonymous to you? You mean the kind of scenario where arrangements have been made beforehand for Jim to live in the garage during some scheduled period? And are both versions synonymous to you? I wasn't imagining Jim living in the garage (although that is a possible meaning of "stay", and if he is/was already living in the garage, then "stay" or "remain" could be used for his continuing to live there). I was just imagining his already being in the garage and continuing to be there in or following whatever situation was being discussed. "Remain" and "stay" overlap in meaning, and where they do, they are interchangeable. "Remain" and "stay" overlap in meaning, and where they do, they are interchangeable. So Jim remains in the garage and Jim stays in the garage are actually synonymous? And they both mean what? That it's been arranged that he stay in the garage during some predetermined time period? Can they also be habitual, describing a habit/tendency not to come out of the garage? If 'X remains in Y' does not describe location at the time of utterance, then I wonder why locative sentences of this form sound so natural to me. They are very common. I've always construed them as synonymous to 'X is still in Y', which is straightforwardly stative. (17) The U.S federal government remains in denial. (18) The law remains in effect. (19) The EP-3 aircraft remains on Hainan Island. (20) The beating victim remains in jail on a parole violation. ^ To me, all of these sound impeccable as descriptions of (concrete or abstract) location at the time of utterance. It seems to me that is still could substitute for remain in all of them, whereas for me, substituting stay produces a change in either meaning or acceptability. So Jim remains in the garage and Jim stays in the garage are actually synonymous? They may be synonymous. What do you want the sentence to mean? Can they also be habitual, describing a habit/tendency not to come out of the garage? I don't think "remain" can be habitual. As I have said before, I cannot think of any situation where "remain" describes anything that could be interpreted as an action. This is not to say that it does not have such a use, just that I cannot think of one. If 'X remains in Y' does not describe location at the time of utterance, then I wonder why locative sentences of this form sound so natural to me. They are very common. I've always construed them as synonymous to 'X is still in Y', which is straightforwardly stative. (17) The U.S federal government remains in denial. (18) The law remains in effect. (19) The EP-3 aircraft remains on Hainan Island. (20) The beating victim remains in jail on a parole violation. (17) and (18) do not, of course, describe a location. (19) and (20) do. I suppose that "Jim remains in the garage" could refer to his current location, but it seems an odd way of doing so. However, clearly "remain" can have this meaning. I don't think "remain" can be habitual. They do this every afternoon. All three of them play cards, and then at four o'clock, the couple leaves. Jim remains in the garage. This accords with Quirk et al , who suggest that dynamism/stativity is gradient rather than binary, with verbs of stance/location somewhere in the middle (1985: 206), and 'current copular verbs' described as being "normally" stative (1985: 1172) I agree that most English verbs, like most concepts behind them, do not restrict themselves to one or the other end of that gradient, but I can't really say much else without a specific test to apply. I can't really say much else without a specific test to apply. Jackendoff's eventivity test, mentioned above, seems a simple and elegant one. Can the remain-clause be desribed as an event through prefixation by what happened was ... ? (21) What happened was that the children remained in the care of the 41-year-old actress. (22) What happened was that only eight of the threatened 31 pits remained open. (23) What happened was that the papers remained in Britain. (24) What happened was that the margin notes remained secret. I cannot think of any situation where "remain" describes anything that could be interpreted as an action. This is not to say that it does not have such a use, just that I cannot think of one. The way I see it, action entails agentivity, which is a slightly different and arguably stricter requirement than dynamism. With that said, it seems to me that when the subject is animate, remain does occasionally occur in agentive uses: it is found in imperatives such as Please remain [seated / in your seats] until ... I am also finding remain-clauses introduced by What X did was, which seems a fairly strong indication of agentivity: (25) I would say the most successful thing I ever did was remain in this amazing game, making a living for such a long period of time. (26) The most horrific thing that Jack the Ripper did was remain elusive. (27) We would criticise them no end if all they did was remain in their ivory tower Beehive offices. Last edited: Aug 22, 2021 Jackendoff's eventivity test, mentioned above, seems a simple and elegant one. Can the remain-clause be desribed as an event through prefixation by what happened was ... ? (21) What happened was that the children remained in the care of the 41-year-old actress. (22) What happened was that only eight of the threatened 31 pits remained open. (23) What happened was that the papers remained in Britain. (24) What happened was that the margin notes remained secret. The way I see it, action entails agentivity, which is a slightly different and arguably stricter requirement than dynamism. With that said, it seems to me that when the subject is animate, remain does occasionally occur in agentive uses: it is found in imperatives such as Please remain [seated / in your seats] until ... I am also finding remain-clauses introduced by What X did was, which seems a fairly strong indication of agentivity: (25) I would say the most successful thing I ever did was remain in this amazing game, making a living for such a long period of time. (26) The most horrific thing that Jack the Ripper did was remain elusive. (27) We would criticise them no end if all they did was remain in their ivory tower Beehive offices. "What happened was" does not necessarily describe something as an event, nor does "What X did was" necessarily indicate agentivity, if I understand the term. Example sentences (21) through (24) are certainly possible in appropriate context, but I would not call the subjects (of remained) in these examples agents. (I feel (22) needs something added, e.g. "What actually happened was ....") Examples (25) through (27) are also possible in appropriate context, but (26) probably needs more contextual help than the others.

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