

Past continuous: to set the atmosphere

- In English, we often use the past continuous tense to describe the atmosphere (set the scene) at a particular time in the past. The events that were taking place at that time.

Example:

- When I walked into the office, several people **were** busily **typing**, some **were** **talking** on the phones, the boss **was** **yelling** directions, and customers **were** **waiting** to be helped. One customer **was** **yelling** at a secretary and **waving** his hands. Others **were** **complaining** to each other about the bad service.
- We often use the past simple and past continuous together when one action interrupts another

The receptionist **was talking** on the phone when the fire alarm **went off**.



1. Read the text and complete with the verbs in the past simple or continuous form.

The best cinema

It was almost the end of the holidays and my friends and I _____ (look for) something interesting to do. We _____ (get) bored of the park, shopping centres and our play stations when my brother mentioned the new 4D cinema. To be honest, we _____ (not- be) very excited but we _____ (decide to) go. While we _____ (buy) the tickets, we _____ (hear) some people talking about how they enjoyed the movie. We _____ (not-understand) what they _____ (talk) about. At first it _____ (be) like a normal cinema. We _____ (watch) the movie when suddenly our seats _____ (start) moving. We _____ (be) really surprised. When the actors _____ (swim), we _____ (feel) water on our faces. When there _____ (be) an explosion, they _____ (send) hot wind along the room. We _____ (not-want) the film to finish. The tickets _____ (be) expensive but the whole experience was worth it!

