

► Past simple and continuous: when and while

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My mum was cooking **when** I arrived home.
We were walking along High Street **when** I saw a lovely smartphone.
Was Sam phoning his friend **when** his mum called him?
Yesterday Sam was texting his friends **while** his parents were having lunch.
What was Sam doing **while** his parents were watching TV?
My parents were sleeping **while** I was watching film after film.

1 Look at the sentences in the table and choose the correct words to complete the rules.

- We use the past continuous for **long / short** actions in the past.
- We use past continuous + **when** + past simple for a long action interrupted by a **short one / two long actions**.
- For two long simultaneous actions in the **past / future**, we use past continuous + **while** + past continuous.

2 What was happening when Mary was having a shower yesterday? Look at the pictures and write the sentences.



1. While Mary ..., her grandmother
2. While ..., her cat
3. While ..., her father
4. While ..., her mum
5. While ..., her dog

3 What was happening when Beth arrived home? Complete the sentences with the past continuous form of the verbs in brackets.

When Beth arrived home, ...

1. her brother Mike ... (not write) an email, he ... (watch) TV.
2. her parents ... (look) at a holiday website, they ... (not prepare) the meal.
3. her sister Lisa ... (not listen) to music on her smartphone, she ... (chat) online.
4. her friend Jed ... (wait) for her, he ... (not use) the computer.
5. the cats Sammy and Fifi ... (sleep), they ... (not eating).

4 Write questions about Beth and Mary.

Mike / write an email / when Beth arrived?

Was Mike writing an email when Beth arrived?

1. Beth's parents / prepare a meal / when she arrived?
2. Lisa / chat online / when Beth arrived?
3. Lisa / listen to music / when Beth arrived?
4. Mary's mum / cook / while Mary / have a shower?
5. What / Mary's dad / do / while Mary / have a shower?

5 Work in pairs. Ask and answer the questions in exercise 4.

6 Complete the text with the words in brackets in the past simple or continuous.

INTERNET HELPS FIGHT CRIME!

Two weeks ago, a robber (1) ... (take) David Reed's laptop when he (2) ... (sleep). David is a writer and he (3) ... (write) a book at that time – it was all on the computer. Two days later, when David (4) ... (try) to find another computer on the Internet, he (5) ... (see) a laptop similar to his old one. David went to the seller's house to buy it. When he (6) ... (look) at the laptop, he realized it was his old one! What (7) ... David ... (do)? He sent a message to the police while he (8) ... (ask) the seller a lot of questions about the computer. Finally, when the police (9) ... (arrive), they found more computers. The man was a real thief!