

Simple Past vs. Past Continuous

Simple Past

We use the **simple past** to talk about:

Completed actions, **habits** and **facts** in the past.



- I **went** to the cinema **yesterday**.
- I **always visited** my grandparents in my summer holidays **when I was little**.
- I **lived** near Liverpool for a couple of years.



Past Continuous

The **past continuous** is used to express:

Interrupted actions, **specific time** as an **interruption** and **parallel actions**.

- I **was watching** TV **when** the phone **rang**.
- **Last night at 7pm, I was having dinner.** **While** she **was doing** her homework **her brother was playing** football.

Complete the sentences with past simple or continuous

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|--------------------|------------|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. We | (cycle) | when the rain | (start). |
| 2. He | (break) | the vase while he | (play) ball at home. |
| 3. My mum | (come) | in while I | (surf) on the net. |
| 4. The electricity | (go off) | as I | (bake) a cake. |
| 5. Sandra | (catch) | when her sister | (fall) down the stairs. |
| 6. I | (play) | golf when it | (begin) to rain. |
| 7. While she | (read) | a novel, her sister | (turn on) the CD player. |
| 8. They | (walk) | along the beach when they | (see) the accident. |
| 9. We | (study) | when we | (hear) a terrible noise. |
| 10. While she | (do) | the ironing, her husband | (set) the table. |
| 11. We | (dance) | when he | (faint). |
| 12. When he | (fall) | down the tree, he | (break) his leg. |
| 13. I | (be) | shocked when I | (hear) the bad news. |
| 14. She | (cry) | when I | (see) her. |
| 15. My parents | (sit) | in the garden while we | (play) badminton. |
| 16. | you | | (swim) in the sea at 6.00 am? |
| 17. Bob | (lie) | in the garden when it | (start) to rain. |
| 18. As I | (put) | the baby to bed, the phone | (ring). |
| 19. What | you | (do) when Dan | (fall)? |
| 20. How | you | | (break) the window? |
| 21. I | (write) | an e-mail when the postman | (deliver) his letter! |
| 22. When I | (leave) | home yesterday, some dogs | (sit) near the front gate. |
| 23. John | (not swim) | at four o'clock. He | (play) football. |
| 24. While I | (swim) | in the river, I | (see) some frogs. |
| 25. Jim | (not pay) | attention when he | (drive) his car into a tree. |
| 26. What | you | (do) while she | (sleep)? |
| 27. Everyone | | (sleep) when the robbers | (break in). |
| 28. We | | (arrive) at the station just as the train | (leave). |

Complete the sentences with *while* or *when*.

1. We were playing basketball it began to rain.
2. The dog was barking we were sleeping.
3. I was watching TV she called.
4. the phone rang, she was writing a letter.
5. we were having the picnic, it started to rain.
6. What were you doing the earthquake started?
7. You were not listening to me I told you to turn the oven off.
8. John was sleeping last night, someone stole his car.
9. I was just getting into the bath the telephone rang.
10. Were you listening he was talking?
11. Ellen was reading, Tim was watching television.
12. she came home from school she really didn't look well

Complete the text with past simple or past continuous

A lorry driver (drive) 200 penguins to London Zoo when his lorry (break) down on the motorway. The driver (get) out of the cab and (look) at the engine when a second lorry driver (stop) in front of him and (ask) if he (need) help.

The penguins' driver (explain) that he (take) the penguins to the zoo and (ask) if the other man would take the penguins there. He (agreed).



Today (not be) not a good day. First of all, my alarm clock (not ring). Then, while I (have) a shower, my dad (go) to work so I had to walk to school. It (rain) and I got very wet. When I (walk) into class everyone (study) hard and in silence. The teacher (look) at me and said, 'Good afternoon John. How nice of you to join us. 'Everyone (laugh). I (be) so embarrassed.