

Past Simple and Past Continuous

Past continuous can describe an activity in the past which was interrupted.

They **were sleeping** when the alarm **went** off.

The activity which was interrupted is in the **past continuous** and the activity which caused the interruption is in the **past simple**.

1. He (paint) the door when a bird (hit) the window.
2. I (watch) television when the postman (arrive)
3. The children (play) when it (start) to rain.
4. I (have) a bath when the telephone (ring)
5. She (shop) when she (bump) into an old friend.
6. I (cook) the supper when the doorbell (ring)
7. He (walk) home when the dog (attack) him.
8. They (dance) when she (slip) and fell.

Past Continuous is used when 2 actions take place at the same time. Both actions will be in the past continuous.

She **was baking** a cake while he **was fixing** the car.

1. While he (paint) the windows, I (wash) the dishes.
2. I (work) while they (sleep)
3. We (relax) while the birds (sing)
4. The boys (play) rugby while the girls (play) hockey.
5. Mom (cook) while Dad (clean)

Past Continuous is used for actions that were in progress at a certain point

He **was flying** all day yesterday.

1. I (watch) a movie last night.
2. I (read) in bed before I went to sleep.
3. He (play) cricket the whole weekend.
4. Jane (work) the whole week.
5. They (hike) in the mountains last weekend.

Past Continuous is used to describe annoying, repeating actions in the past.

He **was** always **sleeping** on duty.

1. He always (borrow) my things.
2. She always (leave) a mess for me to clean up.
3. I complained because their dog always (bark) all night.
4. Our neighbours always (play) their music too loudly.
5. He always (whistle) while he worked.

Fill in the gaps using the correct form of the past tense

This (happen) about five years ago. I (come) back home from Turkey where I (be) on holiday with some friends who (rent) a bungalow in the mountains not far from Ankara, the capital.

Anyway, we (sit) in the plane which (just / take) off when there (be) a loud bang from the right hand side of the plane and I could see a lot of smoke coming from one of the engines. Of course, everyone (start) looking around but the plane (carry) on flying normally. And then a few minutes later the pilot (come) on to the PA and said there was a problem with one of the engines and we'd have to return to the airport.

I felt pretty nervous, I can tell you, but I (try) to concentrate on my book, and about ten minutes later we (land) without any problems. We (have) to wait for about an hour and then we got back on the plane.

Actually, it was a different plane and I was pretty relieved that it was.

