

# Past Continuous – Was going to – Used to – Be/Get used to

6



Listen and repeat. Then act out.

How did the thief get away? *Weren't you following him while he was trying to get away?*

Well, *I was following him when he suddenly ran into the cinema.*

Why didn't you follow him into the cinema?

*I was going to but I've already seen that film twice!*

Past Continuous: **was/were + verb -ing**

| Affirmative       | Interrogative      | Negative              |                                 |
|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
|                   |                    | Long form             | Short form                      |
| I was helping     | Was I helping?     | I was not helping     | I wasn't helping                |
| You were helping  | Were you helping?  | You were not helping  | You weren't helping             |
| He was helping    | Was he helping?    | He was not helping    | He wasn't helping etc.          |
| She was helping   | Was she helping?   | She was not helping   | <b>Negative - Interrogative</b> |
| It was helping    | Was it helping?    | It was not helping    |                                 |
| We were helping   | Were we helping?   | We were not helping   |                                 |
| You were helping  | Were you helping?  | You were not helping  |                                 |
| They were helping | Were they helping? | They were not helping |                                 |
|                   |                    |                       | Wasn't I helping?               |
|                   |                    |                       | Weren't you helping? etc.       |

Time words used with the Past Continuous: **while, when, as**

1 The fire alarm went off at the Crown Hotel last night. Put the verbs in the **past continuous** to describe what each person was doing.

- When the fire alarm went off, Mr Cook ..... *was talking* ..... (talk) on the phone.
- A porter ..... (carry) some luggage.
- Miss Jones ..... (read) a magazine.
- Two men ..... (sit) in the reception area.



## Past Continuous versus Past Simple

### Past Continuous is used:

- for an action that was in the middle of happening at a stated time in the past.  
At 8 o'clock last night she **was watching** TV.
- for two or more actions which were happening at the same time in the past (simultaneous actions).



At 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon Ben **was doing** his homework while his dad **was cooking** dinner.

- for a past action which was in progress when another action interrupted it. We use Past Continuous for the interrupted action and Past Simple for the action which interrupts it.



Linda **was watching** TV when the phone **rang**.

- to describe the background to the events in a story.

We **were walking** in the woods. It **was raining** hard ...

### Past Simple is used:

- for an action completed at a stated time in the past.  
He **finished** his homework at 7 o'clock.
- for actions which happened one after another (sequence of actions).

He **slipped**,  
**fell over** and **hurt** his ankle.



- with non-continuous verbs: **appear** (=seem), **believe**, **belong**, **cost**, **feel**, **forget**, **hate**, **have** (=possess), **know**, **like**, **love**, **mean**, **need**, **prefer**, **realise**, **remember**, **see**, **seem**, **smell**, **sound**, **suppose**, **taste**, **think**, **understand**, **want**, etc.



Sylvia **saw** Alex at the party yesterday.

- for people who are no longer alive.

Shakespeare **wrote** a lot of plays.  
(Shakespeare is dead. He won't write any more.)



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2 Use the *past continuous* or the *past simple* and the phrases to label the pictures. Then identify the speech situations.

- ~~action in the middle of happening~~ • sequence of actions • interrupted action
- simultaneous actions • completed action • people who are no longer alive

1 *action in the middle  
of happening* .....



(they sleep/at 11 o'clock/  
yesterday evening)  
*They were sleeping ..  
at 11 o'clock .....*  
*yesterday evening .....*

2 .....



(wash up/feed the dog/an  
hour ago)  
.....  
.....  
.....

3 .....



(last night/Mrs Smith  
knit/Mr Smith watch TV)  
.....  
.....  
.....

4 .....



(they sunbathe/start to  
rain)  
.....  
.....  
.....

5 .....



(Gustave Eiffel/build/the  
Eiffel Tower)  
.....  
.....  
.....

6 .....



(Claire/have first birthday /  
2 days ago)  
.....  
.....  
.....

## Was / Were going to

**Was going to** is used to express fixed arrangements in the past, unfulfilled plans or an action which someone intended to do in the past but didn't do.

He got up early. **He was going to** catch the 6 o'clock train. (fixed arrangement in the past)

**She was going to** travel around Europe but she didn't because she fell ill. (unfulfilled plan)

**She was going to** buy a new car but in the end she repaired her old one. (She intended to buy a car but she didn't.)