

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.

Worksheet

Verb tenses

Past Simple & Past Continuous

❖ Fill in the blanks with the past simple or the past continuous:



1. When I _____ (arrive) the teacher _____ (write) the summary.
2. He _____ (cross) the road when I _____ (see) him.
3. Why _____ (they / shout) at you when I _____ (wake up)?
4. They _____ (fix) the computer when I _____ (open) the door.
5. _____ (Mary / break) her leg while she _____ (skate)?
6. I _____ (sleep) when she _____ (knock) on the door.
7. When I _____ (see) Jim at the disco he _____ (not / talk) to the DJ.
8. I _____ (watch) a film on TV when the electricity _____ (go) out.
9. The Titanic _____ (not / cross) the Pacific Ocean when it _____ (strike) an iceberg.
10. Paul _____ (not / fall) while he _____ (run) away.
11. Carol _____ (fall) asleep while she _____ (read) a book.
12. While my father _____ (drive) home, he _____ (not / answer) his mobile phone.

PAST SIMPLE & PAST CONTINUOUS

A) CHOOSE THE CORRECT OPTION

- 1.-Anthony **called/was calling** while I **parked/was parking** the car.
- 2.-Miranda **drove/was driving** to work when she **saw/was seeing** the accident.
- 3.-Thomas **didn't watch/wasn't watching** the film when Sonia arrived home.
- 4.-Did he **lie/was he lying** on the sofa at 5,30 yesterday?
- 5.-When I **left/was leaving** the office, the phone **rang/was ringing**.
- 6.-It **snowed/was snowing** in the mountains when we got up yesterday.
- 7.-Barbara **was living/lived** in Paris when she was 15 years old.
- 8.-I **was writing/wrote** my blog on the Internet while you **slept/were sleeping**.
- 9.-While David **was recovering/recovered** in hospital, I decorated the flat.
- 10.-When I **was waking /woke up**, I realized that it **was getting /got** dark.



B) COMPLETE THE SENTENCES USING PAST SIMPLE OR PAST CONTINUOUS TENSE

- 1.-Yesterday at 9,30 pm my parents (sit) in the garden (drink) some Coke.
- 2.- The chambermaid (make) my bed in the hotel and (clean) the bathroom & breakfast.
- 3.- Somebody (knock) on the door while I (read) the newspaper.
- 4.-My brother (buy) a lot of books when he (live) in Cambridge.
- 5.-William (not meet) Sally at the airport last Sunday.
- 6.-Jerry (have) dinner when the lights (go) out.
- 7.-The girl (feel) ill so she (not go) to work.
- 8.-When I (arrive) at the wedding, Miriam (introduce) me to some friends.
- 9.-Sarah (run) to catch the bus, when she (fall) down and (break) her ankle.
- 10.-Richard (teach) at the university when he (meet) his wife.

