

# Storytelling Grammar Guide: Past Simple vs. Past Continuous

## What Are These Tenses?

The **past simple** and **past continuous** are both used to talk about things that happened in the past, but they have different jobs in storytelling.

- **Past Simple:** Describes \_\_\_\_\_ actions that happened and finished in the past
- **Past Continuous:** Describes \_\_\_\_\_ actions that were happening at a specific time in the past

## Past Simple Tense

### When to Use Past Simple

Use past simple for actions that:

1. Started and \_\_\_\_\_ in the past
2. Happened at a \_\_\_\_\_ time
3. Are the main \_\_\_\_\_ in your story

### How to Form Past Simple

**Regular verbs:** Add \_\_\_\_\_ to the base verb

- walk → walked
- play → \_\_\_\_\_
- study → studied

**Irregular verbs:** These change completely and must be \_\_\_\_\_

- go → went
- eat → \_\_\_\_\_
- see → saw

### Past Simple Examples

- I **walked** to school yesterday. (completed action)

- She **finished** her homework at 8 PM. (\_\_\_\_\_ time)
- They **visited** the museum last week. (finished action)

## Past Continuous Tense

### When to Use Past Continuous

Use past continuous for actions that:

1. Were \_\_\_\_\_ at a specific time in the past
2. Provide \_\_\_\_\_ information in a story
3. Were interrupted by another \_\_\_\_\_

### How to Form Past Continuous

**Formula:** was/were + verb + \_\_\_\_\_

- I/he/she/it + \_\_\_\_\_ + verb-ing
- you/we/they + \_\_\_\_\_ + verb-ing

### Past Continuous Examples

- I **was walking** to school when it started raining. (ongoing action)
- She **was studying** at 8 PM last night. (action in \_\_\_\_\_)
- They **were watching** TV when the phone rang. (\_\_\_\_\_ action)

## Using Both Tenses Together in Stories

When telling stories, we often use \_\_\_\_\_ tenses together:

### Pattern 1: Background + Main Action

Past continuous sets the scene, past simple tells what \_\_\_\_\_

- I **was reading** a book when the doorbell \_\_\_\_\_.
- While she **was cooking**, the phone \_\_\_\_\_.
- They **were playing** soccer when it \_\_\_\_\_ to rain.

### Pattern 2: Two Actions at the Same Time

Use \_\_\_\_\_ when two actions happened at the same time

- While I **was studying**, my brother **was** \_\_\_\_\_ video games.
- She **was listening** to music while she **was** \_\_\_\_\_.

## Practice Sentences

Fill in the blanks with the correct form of the verb:

1. Yesterday, I \_\_\_\_\_ (walk) to the store and \_\_\_\_\_ (buy) some milk.
2. While I \_\_\_\_\_ (watch) TV, my mom \_\_\_\_\_ (call) me for dinner.
3. She \_\_\_\_\_ (study) when her friends \_\_\_\_\_ (arrive).
4. Last night, we \_\_\_\_\_ (eat) pizza and \_\_\_\_\_ (watch) a movie.
5. I \_\_\_\_\_ (sleep) when the alarm clock \_\_\_\_\_ (ring).

## Memory Tips

**Past Simple** = \_\_\_\_\_ actions (like taking a photograph)

**Past Continuous** = \_\_\_\_\_ actions (like watching a movie)

Think of past continuous as the "\_\_\_\_\_ scene" and past simple as the "main \_\_\_\_\_" in your story.