

Past Continuous

FORM

was/were + present participle: *I was studying*, etc.

USE

- Used in conjunction with the past simple to describe an action or event that started before the event in the past simple and was in progress when the event in the past simple occurred:
*They **were watching** a film when we **arrived**.*
*She **was studying** law when the war **started**.*
- To describe an action, event or situation that was in progress at a specified time in the past:
*In 1982, we **were living** in a small flat in Bristol.*
*In May of last year, she **was studying** hard for her final exams.*
*At 6 o'clock this morning, I **was walking** along the beach.*
- Used with **while** to describe two actions that were in progress at the same time:
*While I **was driving** along this morning, I **was thinking** about what you'd said.*
*He **was cooking** the dinner **while** she **was talking** to him.*
- With adverbials beginning with **all** e.g. **all night**, **all morning**, **all day yesterday**, to show that an action or event was in progress throughout this time:
*I **was watching** television **all evening**.*
***Were** you **working** **all weekend**?*
- To describe the background and set the scene for a narrative in the past:
*The wind **was blowing** and the rain **was beating** down. John Snell **was standing** at the bus stop shivering. He **was trying** to imagine being at home sitting by a warm fire. Finally he **saw** the headlights of the bus approaching from the distance.*