

English Activity

Level: B1

Skills: Reading and writing

Tense: Past progressive

Objectives: The students will be able to describe actions that were in progress at a definite time in the past, and actions that were interrupted by other ones.

Super Couples

Before you read

Look at the images on each text and in group discuss the answers of the following questions: Have you ever seen them? What do you know about their stories? Do you know about another famous couple? Then read the article and compare your answers.



It's a bird, ... it's a plane, ... it's Superman! Disguised as Clark Kent, this world-famous character met Lois Lane while the two were working as newspaper reporters for the Daily Planet. At first Lois wasn't interested in mild-mannered Kent –she wanted to covered stories about "The Man of Steel." In time, she changed her mind. When Kent proposed, Lois accepted. (And she didn't even know the was Superman!)

Like Superman and Lois Lane, some names just seem to belong together: Marie and Pierre Curie, Gloria and Emilio Estefan, or Ekaterina Gordeeva and Sergei Grinkov. What were these other couples doing when they met? What did they accomplish together? Let's find out.

When she was 24, Maria Sklodowska left Poland and moved to Paris. While she was studying at the Sorbonne, she met physics Pierre Curie. She was planning to return to Poland after her studies, but the two scientists fell in love and got married. While they were raising their daughters, they were also doing research on radioactivity. In 1903, the Curies won the Nobel Prize in physics. Then, in 1096, a horse-drawn carriage hit and killed Pierre while he was out of walking. When Marie recovered from the shock, she continued their work. In 1911, she received her second Nobel Prize.



CONGA! In 1985 millions of people were listening to this hit song. It made singer Gloria Estefan and bandleader Emiliano Estefan international stars. Born in Cuba, Gloria was only 16 months old when she and her family moved to the United States. By that time, she was already showing musical talent. She met Emilio when she spoke to her high school music class. Soon after, she joined this group. The two married a few years later, they were enjoying their success in the music business when Gloria broke her back in a 1990 traffic accident. She recovered and went on to win many awards for her Spanish and English songs.



She was only 11 and she was 15 when their coaches brought them together as skating partners. Off the ice, Sergei didn't pay much attention to "Katia." However, that changed in 1988 when the pair won their first Olympic gold medal for the former Soviet Union. World-famous skaters Ekaterina Gordeeva and Sergei Grinkov thrilled their fans when they married two years later. A baby girl and another Olympic medal followed. Their life seemed perfect. Then one day Sergei collapsed while they were practicing. He died an hour later. Today Gordeeva is remarried and has a new skating partner.



Taken from the book Focus on Grammar 3rd Edition, Pearson Education ESL (pages 9, 10)

After you read

Match the sentences

- a. Clark and Lois met _____ when he was out walking

- b. Pierre met Maria _____ they were also raising their daughter.
- c. While they were doing researches _____ when her family moved to the United States.
- d. He was killed _____ while they were working on a newspaper.
- e. She was showing musical talent _____ while she was studying.
- f. Sergei collapsed _____ while they were practicing.

Answer the following questions

1. What was Marie doing when she met Pierre?

2. What was she planning to do after her studies?

3. What were Gloria and Estefan doing when she broke her back?

4. What were people listening in 1995?

5. When did Sergei collapse?

Grammar tip

- Past progressive is used to describe an action that was in progress at a specific time in the past.
The Curies **were living** in Paris in 1895
- Also it is used with the simple past to talk about an action that was interrupted by another action.
They **were driving** when the accident occurred
- Use the past progressive with *while* or *when* to talk about the actions in progress at the same time in the past.
When she **wasn't looking**, he **was changing** into Superman.

According to the grammar tip, click on all the sentences that are in past continuous.

1. Clark Kent met Lois Lane while the two were working at a newspaper. _____
2. Lois changed her mind when Kent proposed her to cover stories about "The Man of Steel" _____
3. Maria Sklodowska was 24 when she left Poland and moved to Paris. _____
4. While the Curies were raising their daughters, they were also doing research on radioactivity. _____
5. When Gloria moved to the United State, she was already showing musical talent. _____

Extra-practice

Write about your life using Past Progressive and read it in front of the class at the end ask questions to your classmates. (write at least 200 words)
