

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.

Complete the sentences with past simple or continuous

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|--------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. We | (cycle) when the rain | (start). |
| 2. He | (break) the vase while he | (play) ball at home. |
| 3. My mum | (come) in while I | (surf) on the net. |
| 4. The electricity | (go off) as I | (bake) a cake. |
| 5. Sandra | (catch) when her sister | (fall) down the stairs. |
| 6. I | (play) golf when it | (begin) to rain. |
| 7. While she | (read) a novel, her sister | (turn on) the CD player. |
| 8. They | (walk) along the beach when they | (see) the accident. |
| 9. We | (study) when we | (hear) a terrible noise. |
| 10. While she | (do) the ironing, her husband | (set) the table. |
| 11. We | (dance) when he | (faint). |
| 12. When he | (fall) down the tree, he | (break) his leg. |
| 13. I | (be) shocked when I | (hear) the bad news. |
| 14. She | (cry) when I | (see) her. |
| 15. My parents | (sit) in the garden while we | (play) badminton. |
| 16. | you | (swim) in the sea at 6.00 am? |
| 17. Bob | (lie) in the garden when it | (start) to rain. |
| 18. As I | (put) the baby to bed, the phone | (ring). |
| 19. What | you (do) when Dan | (fall)? |
| 20. How | you | (break) the window? |
| 21. I | (write) an e-mail when the postman | (deliver) his letter! |
| 22. When I | (leave) home yesterday, some dogs | (sit) near the front gate. |
| 23. John | (not swim) at four o'clock. He | (play) football. |
| 24. While I | (swim) in the river, I | (see) some frogs. |
| 25. Jim | (not pay) attention when he | (drive) his car into a tree. |
| 26. What | you (do) while she | (sleep)? |
| 27. Everyone | (sleep) when the robbers | (break in). |
| 28. We | (arrive) at the station just as the train | (leave). |

Complete the sentences with *while* or *when*.

1. We were playing basketball _____ it began to rain.
2. The dog was barking _____ we were sleeping.
3. I was watching TV _____ she called.
4. _____ the phone rang, she was writing a letter.
5. _____ we were having the picnic, it started to rain.
6. What were you doing _____ the earthquake started?
7. You were not listening to me _____ I told you to turn the oven off.
8. _____ John was sleeping last night, someone stole his car.
9. I was just getting into the bath _____ the telephone rang.
10. Were you listening _____ he was talking?
11. _____ Ellen was reading, Tim was watching television.
12. _____ she came home from school she really didn't look well

Complete the text with past simple or past continuous

A lorry driver _____ **(drive)** 200 penguins to London Zoo when his lorry _____ **(break)**
 down on the motorway. The driver _____ **(get)** out of the cab and _____ **(look)** at
 the engine when a second lorry driver _____ **(stop)** in front of him and _____ **(ask)** if he
 _____ **(need)** help.

The penguins' driver _____ **(explain)** that he _____ **(take)** the penguins to the zoo and
 _____ **(ask)** if the other man would take the penguins there. He _____ **(agreed)**.



Today _____ **(not be)** not a good day. First of all, my alarm clock _____ **(not ring)**. Then, while
 I _____ **(have)** a shower, my dad _____ **(go)** to work so I had to walk to school.
 It _____ **(rain)** and I got very wet. When I _____ **(walk)** into class everyone _____ **(study)**
 hard and in silence. The teacher _____ **(look)** at me and said, 'Good afternoon John. How nice of you
 to join us. 'Everyone _____ **(laugh)**. I _____ **(be)** so embarrassed.