

2.2 Past Simple and Past Continuous

Past Simple

Suddenly all the electricity **went out**.

I thought we really must do something about this.

She **walked** into the room, **made** herself a cup of coffee and **turned on** her computer.

Form:

regular verbs: infinitive + **-ed**

Many of the most frequently used verbs have an irregular form, e.g. **think** – **thought**, **go** – **went**.

Use:

We use the Past Simple to talk about completed actions and events in the past. We also use the Past Simple to describe a sequence of completed events and actions.

Past Continuous

It was snowing all last night.

About 9 o'clock we were just watching TV.

Form:

was/were + verb + -ing

Use:

1 We use the Past Continuous to talk about actions and situations happening at a specific moment in the past.

A: What were you doing at 10 o'clock this morning?

B: I was waiting at the airport for the visitors to arrive.

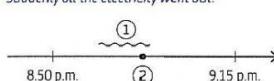
2 We use the Past Continuous in a story to give 'background' details, e.g. the weather, the location, the season, or extra details about someone's life at the time.

She was spending the summer studying English in London when she met him.

3 We use the Past Continuous to talk about a situation or action in progress which is interrupted by another event or action (expressed in the Past Simple).

1 **About 9 o'clock last night we were just watching** TV.

2 **Suddenly all the electricity went out.**



Past Simple and Past Continuous

1 Put the dialogue in the correct order (1-8). Two lines have been done for you.

a Why were you late? What happened? _____
b What were you doing last night? You look tired! 1 _____
c Really? How do you know him? _____
d So you had dinner together? _____
e Yes, we did. And another old friend phoned while we were eating, so she came along, too! 2 _____
f Well. We were looking at the menu when an old colleague, Gaspare, came in. _____
g I met him while I was working in Rome. _____
h We went out to an Italian restaurant for an early dinner but in the end, we stayed very late. _____

2 Complete the sentences using the correct form of the words in the box.

check discuss give go have join talk work

- 1 While I _____ to a colleague, my mobile rang.
- 2 My manager called me and _____ me some important news.
- 3 When I _____ the company, only four other people were working there.
- 4 I _____ for a competitor in Tokyo when I first met my boss.
- 5 While she was giving her presentation, the lights suddenly _____ out.
- 6 I _____ a brilliant idea while I was driving to work today.
- 7 I got to the meeting late and when I arrived my colleagues _____ the budg
- 8 First, I _____ my email and then I made some calls.

3 Choose the correct option in italics.

Some days are good but today was just perfect. ¹*When* / *While* I woke up, the sun was shining. I got up and I ²*had* / *was having* a shower when my phone rang. It was my boss. ³*When* / *While* he was talking, I got a message from a customer. She wanted to see me as soon as possible, so while I ⁴*listened* / *was listening* to my boss, I quickly got dressed and got in my car. While I ⁵*drove* / *was driving* to see the customer, I heard on the radio about a competition to win a holiday. When I parked at the customer's office, I ⁶*sent* / *was sending* a text to enter the competition. ⁷*While* / *When* I was waiting for the customer, I got a message on my phone. My customer arrived at that moment and we started the meeting, so I didn't have time to actually read the message. The customer had good news for us – a big order. We were discussing the details when my boss ⁸*called back* / *was calling back*. He ⁹*wanted* / *was wanting* to offer me a promotion! When I arrived at my office, I ¹⁰*saw* / *was seeing* the text from earlier which said I was the winner of the competition. What a day!