

GRAMMAR: PAST SIMPLE AND PAST CONTINUOUS

1. Choose the correct option. Then decide which tense the underlined verbs are in. Write PS for past simple or PC for past continuous.

The novelist was planning the plot when / while he had a brilliant idea. PC

1. We were watching a film when / while Mum and Dad came home.
2. I bought a few books when / while I was waiting for my plane.
3. The editor was reading the novel when / while she discovered a mistake.
4. Joe fell asleep when / while he was coming home on the bus.
5. The lights came on when / while we were watching the film.
6. The novelist was travelling by train when / while he heard about his award.

2. Complete the sentences with the words in the box

had • met • was waiting • were having • when • while

1. Tim and Oli were reading the same novel when they first
2. It was raining hard we left the house.
3. I arrived while they breakfast.
4. I was sitting in my garden when I a brilliant idea for the plot.
5. I took videos on my phone were travelling in Australia.
6. Sara read the review while she the bus.

3. Choose the correct option.

Last night, the audience / narrator in the Orion Cinema, London (1) **waiting** / **was waiting** excitedly to see the new horror film, *Deep Ocean*, and I was very pleased to be one of them.

When I arrived at the cinema, the stars of the film, Shelley Temple and Dan Stokes, (2) **stood** / **were standing** on the red carpet for photos, and (3) **spoke** / **were speaking** to their fans. They both looked amazing.



The ⁽⁴⁾ **publisher / setting** of the film is a small island in the middle of the ocean and the ⁽⁵⁾ **award / plot** tells the story of a man and a woman who must survive a terrible storm. Unfortunately, when the film started, we were quickly disappointed. The ⁽⁶⁾ **beginning / ending** was exciting, but soon it ⁽⁷⁾ **became / was becoming** clear that Temple and Stokes couldn't act, and the plot was terrible!

The following day, one ⁽⁸⁾ **chapter / critic** wrote that the film was so dull he fell asleep while he ⁽⁹⁾ **watched / was watching** it. Another ⁽¹⁰⁾ **said / was saying** that the film was as exciting as a wet biscuit – a comment that actually made sense when you think about it.

In my opinion, this film isn't going to win any ⁽¹¹⁾ **awards / bestsellers** – except for perhaps the worst horror film of the year. If you want my advice, don't go and see it.

4. Complete the sentences using the past simple short form of the verbs.

- 1 Many critics loved it, but the film _____ (not be) a hit with audiences.
- 2 The hero of the story _____ (travel) across Europe by bicycle.
- 3 We _____ (try) to buy tickets, but there weren't any left.
- 4 All my friends _____ (think) that the ending was disappointing.
- 5 I _____ (not see) that sculpture at the exhibition. Was it realistic?
- 6 Some of the students _____ (make) a video about their school trip.
- 7 The foreign language film _____ (not have) subtitles so I didn't understand it.
- 8 The plot was predictable. Some people _____ (fall) asleep before the ending!

5. Complete the sentences and questions using the past continuous short form of the verbs.

- 1 Our teacher _____ for us in the classroom. (wait)
- 2 I _____ when he spoke. (not listen)
- 3 _____ Marco _____ dinner at six o'clock? (have)
- 4 We _____ the play when you arrived. (discuss)
- 5 The girls _____ on Saturday morning. (not shop)
- 6 _____ you and Sam _____ last weekend? (study)
- 7 The actors _____ in the theatre. (practise)
- 8 She _____ to become a writer. (not plan)

6. Write sentences in the past simple and past continuous with the words. Use the words in brackets.

People / still arrive / the film / start (when)

People were still arriving when the film started.

1. you / buy / some popcorn / you / wait / for your friends / ? (while)
2. where / you / live / you / write / your first novel / ? (when)
3. the novelist / win / his first award / he / study / at university (while)
4. Sam / finish / the novel / he / travel / to school (while)
5. the critic / write / a review / the phone / ring (when)

7. Complete the sentences using the past simple or past continuous form of the verbs and choose the correct option.

- 1 I _____ (see) a famous actor I was walking into town today.
- 2 It _____ (rain) Ben left home this morning.
- 3 _____ we were talking, our train _____ (arrive).
- 4 Everyone laughed they _____ (watch) that hilarious film.
- 5 _____ my parents met, dad _____ (study) in New York.
- 6 The critic was writing a review the phone _____ (ring).

8. Choose the correct option.

What's your favourite film? Mine is *2001: A Space Odyssey*. I (1) saw / was seeing it for the first time in 2018 (2) while / when it was 50 years old! People (3) didn't walk / weren't walking on the moon until 1969, a year after this spectacular film (4) was / was being in cinemas for the first time. Some people think there is not (5) enough / many action in it, but (6) while / when I was watching it, I was amazed at how original it was. In my opinion, some films today use too (7) much / many technology, and there are (8) too / enough many special effects. (9) When / While they made *2001*, they (10) didn't use / weren't using clever computer effects, but it looks incredibly realistic!