

Past Continuous



"The teacher **was writing** on the board."

We use the **past continuous** to indicate that an action was in progress at a certain time in the past.

Form: person + BE (was/were) + verb + -ING

Example: Cindy was watching TV last night at 10.

Sometimes, this action in progress is interrupted by a shorter action in the Simple Past.

"The teacher **was writing** on the board *when* she saw the paper plane."

The **past continuous** can also be used to talk about two actions in progress happening at the same time in the past.

"The teacher **was writing** on the board *while* the students **were making** paper planes."

1. Was or Were?

1. We _____ dancing.
2. The dog _____ barking.
3. The printer _____ printing out a photograph.
4. The students _____ writing a test.
5. Sue and Gareth _____ walking up the hill.

2. Write about what John and his friends were doing yesterday at 6 p.m.

What was John doing? (play golf) _____ *He was playing golf.*

What was Sarah doing? (watch TV) _____

What was Timothy doing? (talk on the phone) _____

What was Steve doing? (read a book) _____

What were the John's friends doing? (play American football) _____

What was the baby doing? (cry) _____

What were John's parents doing? (run) _____

What were John's colleagues doing? (sit in a meeting) _____

What was Jimmy doing? (cycle) _____

What was Noah doing? (listen to music) _____

3. Choose three of the previous sentences and turn them into the negative form.

Example: John wasn't playing football.

4. Fill in the blanks with the verbs in the past simple and past continuous.

- a. Tom (read) _____ when the lights (go) _____ out.
- b. Marvin (come) _____ home, when he (find) _____ money on the street.
- c. When the thief (enter) _____ the house, the police (arrest) _____ him.
- d. Tony (look) _____ at his watch while the teacher (explain) _____ history.
- e. When we (do) _____ a sight-seeing tour, my camera (break) _____.

5. Complete this activity with the verbs in the past simple and past continuous. Careful! Some sentences can have only one tense.

The receptionist (welcome) _____ the guests and (ask) _____ them to fill in the form.

The car (break) _____ down and we (have) _____ to walk home.

The boys (swim) _____ while the girls (sunbathe) _____.

My father (come) _____ in, (look) _____ around and (tell) _____ me to tidy up my room.

While one group (prepare) _____ dinner, the others (collect) _____ wood for their campfire.

While the parents (have) _____ breakfast, their children (run) _____ in the park.

Martha (turn) _____ off the lights and (go) _____ to bed.