

Past continuous (I was doing)

A Study this example situation:



Yesterday Karen and Joe played tennis. They started at 10 o'clock and finished at 11.30.

So, at 10.30 they **were playing** tennis.

they **were playing** =
they were in the middle of playing, they had not finished

was/were + -ing is the past continuous:

he/she/it	was	playing doing working etc.
we/you/they	were	

B **I was doing** something = I was in the middle of doing it at a certain time. The action or situation started before this time, but had not finished:C Compare **I was doing** (*past continuous*) and **I did** (*past simple*):

I was doing (= in the middle of an action)

- ☐ We **were walking** home when I met Dan. (in the middle of walking home)
- ☐ Kate **was watching** TV when we arrived.

I did (= complete action)

- ☐ We **walked** home after the party last night. (= all the way, completely)
- ☐ Kate **watched** TV a lot when she was ill last year.

D You can say that something **happened** (past simple) in the middle of something else (past continuous):

- ☐ Matt **phoned** while we **were having** dinner.
- ☐ It **was raining** when I **got** up.
- ☐ I **saw** you in the park yesterday. You **were sitting** on the grass and **reading** a book.
- ☐ I **hurt** my back while I **was working** in the garden.

But we use the past simple to say that one thing happened *after* another:

- ☐ I **was walking** along the road when I **saw** Dan. So I **stopped**, and we **talked** for a while.

Compare:

- ☐ When Karen arrived, we **were having** dinner. (= we had already started before she arrived)
- ☐ When Karen arrived, we **had** dinner. (= Karen arrived, and then we had dinner)

E Some verbs (for example, **know** and **want**) are not normally used in continuous forms (**is + -ing**, **was + -ing** etc.). See Unit 4A for a list of these verbs.

- ☐ We were good friends. We **knew** each other well. (*not* we were knowing)
- ☐ I was enjoying the party, but Chris **wanted** to go home. (*not* was wanting)

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6.1 Complete the sentences. Choose from:

was looking was wearing wasn't listening weren't looking
was snowing was working were sitting were you going

- 1 Today Helen is wearing a skirt. Yesterday she was wearing trousers.
- 2 'What did he say?' 'I don't know. I _____.'
- 3 We _____ at the back of the theatre. We couldn't hear very well.
- 4 This time last year Steve _____ on a farm.
- 5 They didn't see me. They _____ in my direction.
- 6 The weather was bad. It was very cold and it _____.
- 7 I saw you in your car. Where _____?
- 8 I saw Kate a few minutes ago. She _____ for you.

6.2 Which goes with which?

- 1 When I got to the cafe
- 2 We fell asleep
- 3 Amy learnt Italian
- 4 Tom didn't come out with us
- 5 The car began to make a strange noise
- 6 The TV was on
- 7 When I first met Jessica

- a when she was living in Rome.
- b she was working in a clothes shop.
- c when I was driving home.
- d but nobody was watching it.
- e while we were watching a film.
- f my friends were waiting for me.
- g because he wasn't feeling well.

- 1 f
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____
- 7 _____

6.3 Put the verb into the correct form, past continuous or past simple.



I saw (see) Sue in town yesterday, but she _____ (not/see) me.
She _____ (look) the other way.



I _____ (cycle) home yesterday when a man _____ (step) out into the road in front of me.
I _____ (go) quite fast, but luckily I _____ (manage) to stop in time, and I _____ (not/hit) him.

6.4 Put the verb into the correct form, past continuous or past simple.

- 1 Jenny was waiting (wait) for me when I arrived (arrive).
- 2 'What _____ (you / do) at this time yesterday?' 'I was asleep.'
- 3 '_____ (you / go) out last night?' 'No, I was too tired.'
- 4 How fast _____ (you / drive) when the accident _____ (happen)?
- 5 Sam _____ (take) a picture of me while I _____ (not / look).
- 6 We were in a very difficult position. We _____ (not / know) what to do, so we _____ (do) nothing.
- 7 I haven't seen Alan for ages. When I last _____ (see) him, he _____ (try) to find a job.
- 8 I _____ (walk) along the street when suddenly I _____ (hear) something behind me. Somebody _____ (follow) me. I was scared and I _____ (start) to run.
- 9 When I was young, I _____ (want) to be a pilot. Later I _____ (change) my mind.
- 10 Last night I _____ (drop) a plate when I _____ (do) the washing up. Fortunately it _____ (not / break).

Present perfect 1 (I have done)

A

Study this example situation:



Tom can't find his key.
He's **lost** his key. (= He **has lost** ...)

he **has lost** his key =
he lost it and he doesn't have it now

have lost / has lost is the *present perfect simple*:

I/we/they/you	have (= I've etc.)	finished
he/she/it	has (= he's etc.)	lost
		done
		been etc.

The present perfect simple is **have/has + past participle**. The past participle often ends in **-ed** (finished/decided etc.), but many verbs are *irregular* (**lost/done/written** etc.).

For a list of irregular verbs, see Appendix 1.

B

When we say 'something **has happened**', this is usually new information:

- ☐ Ow! I've **cut** my finger.
- ☐ The road is closed. There's **been** an accident. (= There **has been** ...)
- ☐ Police **have arrested** two men in connection with the robbery.

When we use the present perfect, there is a connection with *now*. The action in the past has a result *now*:

- ☐ Tom **has lost** his key. (= he doesn't have it *now*)
- ☐ He told me his name, but I've **forgotten** it. (= I can't remember it *now*)
- ☐ Sally is still here. She **hasn't gone** out. (= she is here *now*)
- ☐ I can't find my bag. **Have you seen** it? (= do you know where it is *now*?)

Compare **gone (to)** and **been (to)**:

- ☐ James is on holiday. He **has gone to** Italy. (= he is there now or on his way there)
- ☐ Amy is back home now. She **has been to** Italy. (= she has now come back)

C

You can use the present perfect with **just, already** and **yet**.

Just = a short time ago:

- ☐ 'Are you hungry?' 'No, I've **just had** lunch.'
- ☐ Hello. **Have you just arrived**?

Already = sooner than expected:

- ☐ 'Don't forget to pay the bill.' 'I've **already paid** it.'
- ☐ 'What time is Mark leaving?' 'He's **already left**.'

Yet = until now. We use **yet** to show that we are expecting something to happen.

We use **yet** in questions and negative sentences:

- ☐ **Has it stopped** raining **yet**?
- ☐ I've written the email, but I **haven't sent** it **yet**.

D

You can also use the past simple (**did, went, had** etc.) in the examples on this page. So you can say:

- ☐ Ben isn't here. He's **gone** out. or He **went** out.
- ☐ 'Are you hungry?' 'No, I've **just had** lunch.' or 'No, I **just had** lunch.'

7.1 Read the situations and complete the sentences using the present perfect. Choose from these verbs:

break disappear go up grow improve lose shrink stop

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1 Tom is looking for his key. He can't find it. | Tom <u>has lost his key.</u> |
| 2 Maria's English wasn't very good. Now it is better. | Her English |
| 3 My bag was here, but it isn't here any more. | My bag |
| 4 Lisa can't walk and her leg is in plaster. | Lisa |
| 5 Last week the bus fare was £1.80. Now it is £2. | The bus fare |
| 6 Dan didn't have a beard before. Now he has a beard. | Dan |
| 7 It was raining ten minutes ago. It isn't raining now. | It |
| 8 I washed my sweater, and now it's too small for me. | My sweater |

7.2 Put in **been** or **gone**.

- My parents are on holiday. They've gone to Italy.
- Hello! I've just to the shops. I've bought lots of things.
- Tom has just out. He'll be back in about an hour.
- Alice isn't here at the moment. I don't know where she's
- You're very late. Where have you?

7.3 Complete the sentences using the present perfect.

- Sally is still here. She hasn't gone (she / not / go) out.
- I can't find my bag. (you / see / it) anywhere?
- I can't log on to the website. (I / forget) my password.
- I sent Joe an email this morning, but (he / not / reply).
- Is the meeting still going on, or (it / finish)?
- (the weather / change). It's colder now.
- (you / not / sign) the form. Could you sign it now, please?
- Are your friends still here, or (they / go) home?
- Paul doesn't know what he's going to do. (he / not / decide / yet).
- 'Do you know where Julia is?' 'Yes, (I / just / see / her).'
- 'When is David going away?' '..... (he / already / go).'
- A: (your course / start / yet)?
B: Not yet. It starts next week.

7.4 Read the situations and write sentences with **just**, **already** or **yet**.

- After lunch you go to see a friend at her house. She says, 'Would you like something to eat?'
You say: No thank you. I've just had lunch. (have lunch)
- Joe goes out. Five minutes later, the phone rings and the caller says, 'Can I speak to Joe?'
You say: I'm afraid (go out)
- You are eating in a restaurant. The waiter thinks you have finished and starts to take your plate away.
You say: Wait a minute! (not / finish)
- You plan to eat at a restaurant tonight. You phone to reserve a table. Later your friend says, 'Shall I phone to reserve a table?' You say: No, (do it)
- You know that Lisa is looking for a place to live. Perhaps she has been successful.
You ask her: ? (find)
- You are still thinking about where to go for your holiday. A friend asks, 'Where are you going for your holiday?' You say: (not / decide)
- Laura went out, but a few minutes ago she returned. Somebody asks, 'Is Laura still out?'
You say: No, (come back)

Present perfect 2 (I have done)

A

Study this example conversation:

- DAVE: **Have** you **travelled** a lot, Jane?
 JANE: Yes, I've **been** to lots of places.
 DAVE: Really? **Have** you ever **been** to China?
 JANE: Yes, I've **been** to China twice.
 DAVE: What about India?
 JANE: No, I **haven't been** to India.



When we talk about a period of time that continues from the past until now, we use the *present perfect* (**have been** / **have travelled** etc.). Here, Dave and Jane are talking about the places Jane **has visited** in her life, which is a period that continues until now.

In the same way we say:

- ☐ **Have** you **ever eaten** caviar?
- ☐ We've never **had** a car.
- ☐ I don't know what the film is about. I **haven't seen** it.
- ☐ Susan really loves that book. She's **read** it three times. (She's = She **has**)
- ☐ It's a really boring movie. It's the most boring movie I've **ever seen**.

been (to) = visited:

- ☐ I've never **been to** Canada. Have you **been** there?

B

In the following examples too, the speakers are talking about a period that continues until now (**recently, in the last few days, so far, since I arrived** etc.):

- ☐ **Have** you **heard** anything from Ben **recently**?
- ☐ I've **met** a lot of people **in the last few days**.
- ☐ Everything is going well. There **haven't been** any problems **so far**.
- ☐ The weather is bad here. It's (= It **has**) **rained** every day **since I arrived**. (= from when I arrived until now)
- ☐ It's good to see you again. We **haven't seen** each other **for a long time**.



In the same way we use the present perfect with **today, this evening, this year** etc. when these periods are not finished at the time of speaking:

- ☐ I've **drunk** four cups of coffee **today**.
- ☐ **Have** you **had** a holiday **this year**?
- ☐ I **haven't seen** Tom **this morning**. Have you?



C

We say 'It's the (first) time something **has happened**'. For example:

Don is having a driving lesson. It's his first lesson.
 We can say:

- ☐ It's the first time he **has driven** a car. (*not drives*)
- or He **hasn't driven** a car **before**.
- or He **has never driven** a car **before**.

In the same way we say:

- ☐ Sarah has lost her passport again. This is the second time this **has happened**. (*not happens*)
- ☐ Andy is phoning his girlfriend again. It's the third time he's **phoned** her **this evening**.



Exercises

8.1 You ask people about things they have done. Write questions with **ever**.

- (ride / horse?) Have you ever ridden a horse?
- (be / California?) Have
- (run / marathon?)
- (speak / famous person?)
- (most beautiful place / visit?) What's

8.2 Complete B's answers. Some sentences are positive and some negative. Use these verbs:

be be eat happen have have meet play read see try

- | A | B |
|---|---|
| 1 What's Mark's sister like? | I've no idea. <u>I've never met</u> her. |
| 2 Is everything going well? | Yes, we <u>haven't had</u> any problems so far. |
| 3 Are you hungry? | Yes, I much today. |
| 4 Can you play chess? | Yes, but for ages. |
| 5 Are you enjoying your holiday? | Yes, it's the best holiday for a long time. |
| 6 What's that book about? | I don't know. it. |
| 7 Is Brussels an interesting place? | I've no idea. there. |
| 8 I hear your car broke down again yesterday. | Yes, it's the second time this month. |
| 9 Do you like caviar? | I don't know. it. |
| 10 Mike was late for work again today. | Again? He late every day this week. |
| 11 Who's that woman by the door? | I don't know. her before. |

8.3 Write four sentences about yourself. Use **I haven't** and choose from the boxes.

used a computer travelled by bus eaten any fruit
 been to the cinema read a book lost anything

- I haven't used a computer today.
-
-
-
-

today
 this week
 recently
 for ages
 since ...
 this year

8.4 Read the situations and complete the sentences.

- Jack is driving a car for the first time. He's very nervous and not sure what to do.
It's the first time he's driven a car.
- Some children at the zoo are looking at a giraffe. They've never seen one before.
 It's the first time a giraffe.
- Sue is riding a horse. She doesn't look very confident or comfortable.
 She before.
- Joe and Lisa are on holiday in Japan. They've been to Japan once before.
 This is the second time
- Emily is staying at the Prince Hotel. She stayed there a few years ago.
 It's not the first this hotel.
- Ben is playing tennis for the first time. He's a complete beginner.
 before.