

Past Simple vs. Past Continuous

- The Past Simple and Past Continuous are used together to indicate a past action which was in progress when another sudden action interrupted it.
- We use the Past Continuous tense for the longer action, which was in progress.
- We use the Past Simple tense for the shorter action, which was accomplished before the moment of speaking.

E.g. They were swimming in the lake when the rain started.

1. Put the verb between brackets into the correct tense. Use either Past Simple or Past Continuous:

- Mark (drive) to Brighton when his car broke down.
- Philip (listen) to music when the phone rang.
- When John met Anna, she (study) to become a teacher.
- Mum (prepare) dinner when someone rang the doorbell.
- I (meet) my deskmate while I was walking in the park.
- We found an old clock while we (paint) the attic.
- Sam was working in the garden when his wife (call) him.
- They (swim) in the sea when the shark attacked them.
- The boys broke the window while they (play) football.

2. Choose the correct answer:

E.g. I was listening / listened to my teacher when the bell was ringing / rang.

- She was doing / did her homework when her mother came / was coming home.
- He was sitting / sat on a bench while they played / were playing volleyball.
- Samuel was reading a book when he was falling asleep / fell asleep.
- We drove / were driving to Exeter when we listened / were listening to music.
- I was / was being in the garage when the phone rang / was ringing.
- Mark cleaned / was cleaning the window when he was falling / fell.
- Mary and I were making / made pancakes when the cat jumped on the table.
- I was going / went to the library when I met / was meeting my cousin.
- They were dancing / danced in the club when the lights were going out / went out.

3. Match each question with its right answer:

- a. What were they doing when the lights went out?
 - b. Where were you going when I saw you?
 - c. Why was the baby crying when he saw Santa?
 - d. Who was teaching French when you were a student?
 - e. When did you meet Sarah?
 - f. How many pancakes did you make last night?
 - g. How much time did you stay at the seaside?
 - h. How long did the exam last?
 - i. Who was singing on the radio when you turned it on?
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1. Last week.
 2. I made twenty.
 3. Luciano Pavarotti.
 4. We stayed for two weeks.
 5. They were playing computer games.
 6. To the office.
 7. He was afraid of his beard.
 8. It lasted three hours.
 9. Mr. Phillips.

4. Fill in the correct forms with the Past Simple or Past Continuous:

One day I (go) *...was going...* to school, when I (see) *...saw...* a kid. He (sit) on a bench and I (wonder) what he (do) there. Then I (notice) That he (cry) when the boy (see) me, he (come) to me and (ask) to help him find his parents. They (walk) in the park when the boy (get lost) I (take) him by his hand and I (decide) to go to the police station. While we (go) down the street, I (see) two people who (run) towards us. They (call) the boy and so I (realise) that they were the boy's parents. They (be) so happy to see their boy and they (thank) me. They (buy) me and the boy two large chocolate cakes. After a while we (leave) home.