Read the Laszlo Biro story and choose the correct form of the verbs.

People *wrote / were writing* with quills, pens and pencils long before Laszlo Biro *invented / was inventing* his biro 1938. While he *worked / was working* as a journalist in Hungary, he *noticed / was noticing* that the ink used in newspaper printing dried quickly. But this ink would not flow into the tip of a fountain pen. In 1938, he *developed / was developing* a new tip using a ball that was free to turn in its socket. He *died / was dying* in Buenos Aires in 1985.

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Complete the sentence with the correct form (past simple or past continuous) of the verbs in brackets

1. Our company _____ (lose) money at an alarming rate but then in 2010 we _____ (launch) our Hermes 5 tablet computer. Sales _____ (go up) dramatically and our financial situation _____ (improve) rapidly.

2. We _____ (have) a successful negotiation when suddenly our boss _____ (phone) us to say he _____ (want) completely different conditions.

3. We _____ (plan) to patent our new drug but we _____ (wait) far too long. A month after our discovery, our main competitor _____ (sell) basically the same product.

4. Julia _____ (decide) to take a few months off in 2001, when she _____ (work) for Clairval Cosmetics. While she (tour) New Zealand, she _____ (develop) an interest in Maori culture. She _____ (take) samples of some of the plants used in their rituals because she _____ (believe) they could be used in some of her company's products.

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