

PAST CONTINUOUS + SIMPLE PAST

We often use the **Past Continuous** with the **Simple Past** when a **long action** is interrupted by a **short action**. We use the words **WHILE** or **WHEN** to join the ideas.

WHILE + long action (past continuous): **I was watching TV** (this action was in progress)

WHEN + short action (simple past): **the earthquake started** (this action interrupted)

There are 4 basic combinations:

While	Past Continuous	,	Simple Past
When	Simple Past	,	Past Continuous
	Simple Past	while	Past Continuous
	Past Continuous	when	Simple Past

EXAMPLES:

While I was watching TV, the earthquake started.

When the earthquake started, I was watching TV.

The earthquake started **while** I was watching TV.

I was watching TV **when** the earthquake started.

ACTIVITY 1. Complete the sentences with SIMPLE PAST or PAST CONTINUOUS of the verbs in parenthesis.

- We _____ (play) football **when** the rain _____ (start).
- He _____ (break) the vase **while** he _____ (play) ball at home.
- My mom _____ (come) in **while** I _____ (surf) on the net.
- Sandra _____ (run) **when** she _____ (fall) down the stairs.
- I _____ (play) golf **when** it _____ (begin) to rain.
- While** she _____ (read) a novel, her sister _____ (turn off) the lights.
- They _____ (walk) along the beach **when** they _____ (see) the accident.
- We _____ (study) in the library **when** we _____ (hear) a scary voice.
- While** she _____ (do) the ironing, her husband _____ (set) the table.
- Ricardo and I _____ (dance) **when** he _____ (fall).
- When** the thief _____ (fall) down the tree, he _____ (hide) from the police.
- I _____ (wait) outside the hospital **when** I _____ (hear) the bad news.
- She _____ (cry) **when** I _____ (see) her.
- My parents _____ (sit) in the garden **while** we _____ (play) badminton.
- Bob _____ (lie) in the garden **when** it _____ (start) to rain.
- What _____ you _____ (do) **when** Daniel _____ (fall)?
- I _____ (talk) to customer service **when** the postman _____ (deliver) my package!
- While** I _____ (swim) in the river, I _____ (see) some frogs.
- Jim _____ (send) a message **when** he _____ (crash) his car into a tree.
- While** I _____ (put) the baby down, the phone _____ (ring)

ACTIVITY 2. Complete the sentences with *while* or *when*.

1. We were playing basketball it began to rain.
2. The dog was barking we were sleeping.
3. I was watching TV she called.
4. the phone rang, she was writing a letter.
5. we were having the picnic, it started to rain.
6. What were you doing the earthquake started?
7. You were not listening to me I told you to turn the oven off.
8. John was sleeping last night someone stole his car.
9. I was just getting into the bath the telephone rang.
10. Were you listening he was talking?
11. Ellen was reading, Tim was watching television.
12. she came home from school she really didn't look well.

ACTIVITY 3. Complete the text with past simple or past continuous.

Today (not be) not a good day. First, my alarm clock (not ring). Then, while I (have) a shower, my dad (go) to work so I had to walk to school. It (rain) and I got very wet. When I (arrive) to the classroom everyone (study) in silence. The teacher (look) at me and said, 'Good afternoon, Luis. How nice of you to join us.' Everyone (laugh). I (be) so embarrassed.