

## Past Simple or Past Continuous

We often use the **past continuous** and the **past simple** in the same sentence. The action in the past simple is short and usually unexpected. It interrupts the "longer" action which is usually in a past continuous form.

For example:

What **were** you **doing** when the plane **landed**?

I **was** **looking** in my bag for my passport when I **heard** a shout.

We **jumped** into a car that **was** **waiting** for the bus stop.

I **was** **watching** TV while my wife **was** **sleeping**.

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	Rule	Examples
When	<b>When</b> is followed by a sentence in <b>past simple</b> .	<b>When</b> I <b>took</b> the photo, the kids <b>were</b> <b>playing</b> . The kids <b>were</b> <b>playing</b> <b>when</b> I <b>took</b> the photo.
While	<b>While</b> is followed by a sentence in <b>past continuous</b> .	<b>While</b> I <b>was</b> <b>having</b> dinner, my father <b>arrived</b> . My father <b>arrived</b> <b>while</b> I <b>was</b> <b>having</b> dinner.
While	<b>While</b> is also used when two actions are happening simultaneously.	<b>While</b> I <b>was</b> <b>watching</b> TV my mother <b>was</b> <b>cooking</b> . I <b>was</b> <b>watching</b> TV <b>while</b> my mother <b>was</b> <b>cooking</b> .

## Choose Past Simple or Past Continuous 1

Make the past simple or past continuous

1) I  (sit) in a cafe when you  (call) .

[ . ] [ . ]

2) When you  (arrive) at the party, who

(be) there?

[ . ] [ . ]

3) Susie  (watch) a film when she

(hear) the noise.

[ . ] [ . ]

4) Yesterday I  (go) to the library, next I

(have) a swim, later I  (meet) Julie for coffee.

[ . ] [ . ] [ . ]

5) We  (play) tennis when John

(hurt) his ankle.

6) What  (they/do) at 10pm last night - it was really noisy?

[ . ]

7) He  (take) a shower when the telephone  
 (ring).

[ . ] [ . ]

8) He  (be) in the shower when the telephone  
 (ring).

[ . ] [ . ]

9) When I  (walk) into the room, everyone  
 (work).

[ . ] [ . ]

10) It  (be) a day last September. The sun  
 (shine) and the birds  (sing) . I  
 (walk) along the street when I   
(meet) an old friend.

11) He  (live) in Russia when the Revolution  (start).

[ . ] [ . ]

12) When her train  (get) to the station, we  (wait) on the platform.

[ . ] [ . ]

13) He  (be) so annoying! He  (always leave) his things everywhere.

[ . ] [ . ]

14) On holiday we  (visit) Rome,  (see) the Vatican, and  (spend) a few days at the beach.

[ . ] [ . ] [ . ]

15) Why  (stand) on a chair when I  (come) into the room?

16) They  (live) in Germany when they  (be) young.

[ . ] [ . ]

17) At 7pm yesterday, we  (listen) to music.

[ . ]

18) When I  (leave) the house, it  (snow).

[ . ] [ . ]

19) He  (work) in a bank when he  (meet) his wife.

[ . ] [ . ]

20) What  (you/do) when I  (call) you last night?