

Past Continuous

FORM

was/were + present participle: *I was studying*, etc.

USE

- Used in conjunction with the past simple to describe an action or event that started before the event in the past simple and was in progress when the event in the past simple occurred:

They were watching a film when we arrived.

She was studying law when the war started.

- To describe an action, event or situation that was in progress at a specified time in the past:

In 1982, we were living in a small flat in Bristol.

In May of last year, she was studying hard for her final exams.

At 6 o'clock this morning, I was walking along the beach.

- Used with **while** to describe two actions that were in progress at the same time:

While I was driving along this morning, I was thinking about what you'd said.

He was cooking the dinner while she was talking to him.

- With adverbials beginning with **all** e.g. **all night, all morning, all day yesterday**, to show that an action or event was in progress throughout this time:

I was watching television all evening.

Were you working all weekend?

- To describe the background and set the scene for a narrative in the past:

The wind was blowing and the rain was beating down. John Snell was standing at the bus stop shivering. He was trying to imagine being at home sitting by a warm fire. Finally he saw the headlights of the bus approaching from the distance.