

simple past or past progressive? *I walked / I was walking*

We use the **simple past** to talk about **complete** actions (long or short).

We use the **past progressive** for actions which were **not complete** at a past time.

Joe **got up** at 7.00 and **worked** from 9.00 to 4.00.

At 8.00, when Joe came home, I **was reading**.



1 Simple past or past progressive?

- ▶ I lived / was living in France for eight years.
- ▶ Sue lived / was living in France when her uncle died.
- 1 At 6.15, when you phoned, I had / was having a shower.
- 2 We watched / were watching TV all evening.
- 3 Matt watched / was watching TV when Anita came in.
- 4 My father worked / was working hard all his life.
- 5 They got married while they studied / were studying at London University.
- 6 Yesterday we drove / were driving from Oxford to Edinburgh and back.
- 7 It was a nice evening, so she walked / was walking home from work.
- 8 I met Sylvie while I worked / was working in Japan.
- 9 At university I studied / was studying physics.
- 10 When I last saw him he talked / was talking to a policeman.

2 Complete the sentences with past progressive verbs.

- ▶ When I got home (*the children watch TV*) When I got home the children were watching TV.
- ▶ (*you cycle*) when you broke your leg Were you cycling when you broke your leg?
- ▶ When I saw Joan (*she look*) happy When I saw Joan she wasn't looking happy.
- 1 At seven o'clock on Friday (*we play cards*)
- 2 When I saw him he was holding the phone but (*talk*)
- 3 When Mary got up (*it snow*)
- 4 When I saw Alice, (*she walk*) very fast
- 5 What (*you do*) at ten o'clock yesterday evening
- 6 When you heard them, (*they talk about me*)
- 7 How fast (*you drive*) when you had the accident
- 8 The doorbell rang when I (*expect*) anybody
- 9 I don't know what I (*do*) at 10.00 on January 13th, 2005
- 10 I had to drive to London because the trains (*run*) when I left home

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Note the difference when we use the **past progressive** and the **simple past** together.

Past progressive: longer action or situation.

Simple past: complete shorter action that happened while the longer action was happening.

While I **was having** a bath,

While I **was talking** to my brother,



the phone **rang**.



Bill **came in**.

3 Put simple past and past progressive verbs in the right places.

- ▶ While I **was walking** down the road, I **saw** Bill. (walk; see)
- 1 While I the newspaper, the cat on to the table. (read; jump)
- 2 Alan Helen while he in Morocco. (meet; travel)
- 3 Sally her leg while she (break; ski)
- 4 While I, somebody my car. (shop; steal)
- 5 Ruth me eight times yesterday while I (phone; work)
- 6 The police me while I home. (stop; drive)
- 7 I an interesting report on the radio while I breakfast. (hear; have)
- 8 Dad to sleep again while he TV. (go; watch)
- 9 While I I a glass. (wash up; break)
- 10 I my hand while I in the kitchen. (cut; work)
- 11 When I the house I took my coat because it (leave; snow)
- 12 When I the door they about me. (open; talk)
- 13 The telephone while I lunch. (ring; cook)
- 14 When I last from Harry he in Portugal. (hear; work)

4 Correct (✓) or not (x)?

- 1 This morning I listened to the news before I was going out.
- 2 I walked up to the policeman and asked him the way to the station.
- 3 When Ann arrived I was writing letters.
- 4 The cat was bringing in a mouse while I was having breakfast.
- 5 I didn't go out because when I looked out of the window it rained.
- 6 When I went to sleep the teacher was talking about grammar.
- 7 The teacher was still talking about grammar when I woke up.
- 8 Jenny and Takashi got married while she worked in Tokyo.

5 Put in words from the box, in the simple past or past progressive.

drive open pass pull run shine ✓ sing start turn turn wait

It was a beautiful morning. The sun ▶ **was shining** and birds 1..... About five thousand people 2..... in front of the palace. At 10.00, the guards 3..... the Palace gates, and the President's car 4..... out and 5..... left into Democracy Street. The crowds 6..... to sing the National Anthem. The President's car 7..... right into Constitution Square. Then suddenly, just as it 8..... the Ritz Hotel, a man 9..... out in front of it and 10..... a gun from his pocket.

In some answers, both contracted forms (for example *I'm*, *don't*) and full forms (for example *I am*, *do not*) are possible. Normally both are correct.

past tenses: more practice

1 Simple past. Make sentences.

- ▶ the train / stop / at every station **+** *The train stopped at every station.*
- ▶ when / my letter / arrive **?** *When did my letter arrive?*
- ▶ the doctor / remember / my name **-** *The doctor didn't remember my name.*
- 1 what / all those people / want **?**
- 2 all your brothers / send you / birthday cards **?**
- 3 the baby / eat / some toothpaste this morning **+**
- 4 the teacher / answer / my question **-**
- 5 I / lose / my keys again yesterday **+**
- 6 anybody / phone / while I was out **?**
- 7 The Prime Minister / tell / us that things were getting better **+**
- 8 My friends and I / believe / the Prime Minister **-**
- 9 Richard / give / me a birthday present **-**
- 10 What time / you / get up / today **?**

2 Past progressive. Complete the sentences with past progressive verbs.

- ▶ When I walked in (*the children fight* **+**) *the children were fighting.*
- ▶ What (*you do* **?**) in my office when I came in *were you doing*
- ▶ When I had the accident (*I drive* **-**) fast *I wasn't driving.*
- 1 At 9.00 on Sunday (*we watch TV* **+**)
- 2 When I saw him he was holding a paper, but (*read* **-**)
- 3 When you heard them, (*they speak English* **?**)
- 4 When you got home, what (*the children do* **?**)
- 5 Anna arrived when I (*expect* **-**) her
- 6 I don't know what I (*do* **+**) at 6.00 on February 18th
- 7 When I looked out of the window it (*snow* **+**) again
- 8 I had to drive to work because the trains (*run* **-**)
- 9 How fast (*you drive* **?**) when the police caught you
- 10 When I saw Peter, he (*stand* **+**) and looking up at my window

3 Simple past and past progressive. Put in the correct verb forms.

- ▶ They *told* the police that they *were playing* cards at 10.00. (*tell; play*)
- 1 When I out of the house I took my umbrella because it (go; rain)
- 2 This morning I the newspaper before I went out. (*read*)
- 3 you the football match last night? (*watch*)
- 4 When I into the room they about clothes. (*walk; talk*)
- 5 At 8 o'clock yesterday morning I in the sea. (*swim*)
- 6 I walked up to the classroom window and in. The teacher but nobody (*look; talk; listen*)
- 7 The telephone as usual, while I a bath. (*ring; have*)
- 8 This time last Friday I on the beach. (*lie*)
- 9 Why you home early yesterday? (*go*)
- 10 When I first John he round the world. (*meet; travel*)

4 Grammar in a text. Complete the text with the correct forms of the verbs in brackets.

Yesterday I 1 (get up) *got up* at 7.00. When I 2 (look) out of the window it 3 (rain), exactly like every other day this week. I 4 (wash), 5 (get dressed), 6 (give) the cat his breakfast, and 7 (make) coffee. I 8 (not eat) anything, because I'm never hungry in the morning. Then I 9 (go) to the bus stop and 10 (wait) for the bus. It 11 (not arrive), as usual, so I 12 (walk) to the office. While I 13 (walk), I decided once again that it was time to find another job – one with a car. When I 14 (arrive), nobody 15 (work) – 16 (talk) about the weather. The boss 17 (come in) and 18 (tell) everybody to start working, but this 19 (not make) much difference. I 20 (sit down) at my desk and 21 (start) thinking about football.

5 GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY. Make sure you know all the words in the box. Use a dictionary if necessary. Then try to correct the mistakes. Find the answers on the internet if necessary.

build climb compose discover make invent paint write

- ▶ Galileo wrote 'Hamlet'. *Galileo discovered the moons of Jupiter.*
- ▶ Shakespeare discovered the moons of Jupiter. *Shakespeare wrote 'Hamlet'.*
- 1 Mozart built the Eiffel Tower.
- 2 Leonardo da Vinci directed 'Ivan the Terrible'.
- 3 Shah Jehan invented dynamite.
- 4 Alfred Nobel wrote the song 'Help'.
- 5 Sergei Eisenstein built the Taj Mahal.
- 6 Gustave Eiffel wrote 'Pride and Prejudice'.
- 7 Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay composed 'The Marriage of Figaro'.
- 8 Marie Curie first climbed Mount Everest.
- 9 John Lennon and Paul McCartney discovered radium.
- 10 The novelist Jane Austen painted the 'Mona Lisa'.

6 Internet exercise. What did these people do? Use a search engine (e.g. Google) to find out the answers, if necessary.

- 1 Alexander Fleming
- 2 Giuseppe Verdi
- 3 Rembrandt van Rijn
- 4 Edmund Whymper
- 5 Mary Shelley
- 6 Stephanie Kwolek
- 7 Christopher Wren
- 8 Akira Kurosawa

