

PAST SIMPLE AND PAST CONTINUOUS

RULES:

We use the past continuous for an action that we were in the middle of.

They were dancing last evening.



We use the past simple for a complete action in the past.

He ate all his meal.



We often use the past continuous and past simple together when one (shorter) action comes in the middle of another (longer) action.

EXAMPLE:

While we were reading (longer action) on the beach, it started (shorter action) to rain.

He was waiting (longer action) for a train when he heard (shorter action) a voice.

NOTE:

WHILE + PAST CONTINUOUS

WHEN + PAST SIMPLE

ACTIVITIES:

1 Complete the sentences with WHEN or WHILE.

1. We were sleeping on the beach _____ somebody stole our clothes.
2. Where were you going _____ we met you?
3. Were you watching the match _____ I phoned you?
4. We saw a bear _____ we were cycling in the forest.
5. We saw the Pyramids _____ we visited Egypt.
6. I took photos of my friend _____ we were skiing.
7. She was climbing _____ she had an accident.

8. We met lots of friendly people _____ we were travelling across Canada.
9. My friend spoke English _____ she was staying in London.
10. My parents weren't sleeping _____ I got home late.

2 Drag the following verbs with the correct sentence.

broke saw was climbing was diving was running Was she playing

1. I _____ into the lake **when** I hit my head.
2. She fell over **while** she _____ for the bus.
3. Who were you talking to **when** I _____ you this morning?
4. He lost his keys **while** he _____ over the wall.
5. _____ football **when** she hurt her leg?
6. Were they sitting in their living room **when** the thief _____ the window?

3 Join the sentence halves.

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. The baby started crying | when he got lost? |
| 2. Where was Adam driving to | While he was on holiday. |
| 3. Dad sent me a postcard | when my computer crashed. |
| 4. I was plugging in my memory stick | while I was playing tennis. |
| 5. Were you watching TV | when I turned on the radio while she was sleeping |
| 6. Mum waited for me in the park | while I was cooking dinner? |

4 Complete the sentences using the past simple and past continuous.

1. What _____ (you/do) when you fell in the river?
2. We were sitting on the bus when we _____ (see) the accident.
3. Richard was chatting online when I _____ (call) him.