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INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE APRENDIZAJE / LEARNING UNIT # 1

DESARROLLO DE PROCESOS DE INGLÉS COMUNICACIÓN A NIVEL ELEMENTAL

PAST CONTINUOUS REVIEW AND PRACTICE

1. A series of parallel actions

USE 1 Atmosphere

In English, we often use a series of parallel actions to describe the atmosphere at a particular time in the past.

Example 1:

- When I walked into the office, several people **were** busily **typing**, some **were talking** on the phones, the boss **was yelling** directions, and customers **were waiting** to be helped. One customer **was yelling** at a secretary and **waving** his hands. Others **were complaining** to each other about the bad service.

Example 2: When I came to the school, the school bell was ringing, many students were running towards the garden, teachers were going out of the classroom, and there were some janitors cleaning the hallway.



PRACTICE

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Task Instructions: Use a series of parallel actions to describe the atmosphere at a particular time in the past. (Take 10 minutes to organize your ideas).

When I got to my job.....



LIVEWORKSHEETS

USE 2 Specific Time as an Interruption



In USE 1, described above, the past continuous is interrupted by a shorter action in the simple past. However, you can also use a specific time as an interruption.

Examples:

- Last night at 6 PM, I **was eating** dinner.
- At midnight, we **were** still **driving** through the desert.
- Yesterday at this time, I **was sitting** at my desk at work.

USE 3 Parallel Actions



When you use the past continuous with two actions in the same sentence, it expresses the idea that both actions were happening at the same time. The actions are parallel.

Examples:

- I **was studying** while he **was making** dinner.
- While Ellen **was reading**, Tim **was watching** television.
- **Were** you **listening** while he **was talking**?
- I **wasn't paying** attention while I **was writing** the letter, so I made several mistakes.
- What **were** you **doing** while you **were waiting**?
- Thomas **wasn't working**, and I **wasn't working** either.
- They **were eating** dinner, **discussing** their plans, and **having** a good time.

USE 4 Interrupted Action in the Past



Use the past continuous to indicate that a longer action in the past was interrupted. The interruption is usually a shorter action in the simple past. Remember this can be a real interruption or just an interruption in time.

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Examples:

- I **was watching** TV when she called.
- When the phone rang, she **was writing** a letter.
- While we **were having** the picnic, it started to rain.
- What **were** you **doing** when the earthquake started?
- I **was listening** to my iPod, so I didn't hear the fire alarm.
- You **were not listening** to me when I told you to turn the oven off.
- While John **was sleeping** last night, someone stole his car.
- Sammy **was waiting** for us when we got off the plane.
- While I **was writing** the email, the computer suddenly went off.
- A: What **were** you **doing** when you broke your leg?
  B: I **was snowboarding**.

Task Instructions: Apply the different uses of PAST CONTINUOUS and write a dialogue. Make sure you apply each use of the target structure at least 2-3 times.

Note: Use linking words so, but, and, because, or.



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Start writing your dialogue here:

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USE 5 Repetition and Irritation with *Always*



The past continuous with words such as *always* or *constantly* expresses the idea that something irritating or shocking often happened in the past. The concept is very similar to the expression *used to* but with negative emotion. Remember to put the words *always* or *constantly* between *be* and *verb+ing*.

Examples:

- She **was always coming** to class late.
- He **was constantly talking**. He annoyed everyone.
- I didn't like them because they **were always complaining**.

ADVERB PLACEMENT

Examples:

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- You were **just** studying when she called.
- Were you **just** studying when she called?



While vs. When

Clauses are groups of words which have meaning, but are often not complete sentences. Some clauses begin with the word *when* such as "when she called" or "when it bit me." Other clauses begin with *while* such as "while she was sleeping" and "while he was surfing." When you talk about things in the past, *when* is most often followed by the verb tense simple past, whereas *while* is usually followed by past continuous. *While* expresses the idea of "during that time." Study the examples below. They have similar meanings, but they emphasize different parts of the sentence.

Examples:

- I was studying **when she called**.
- **While I was studying**, she called.



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