



PAST SIMPLE VS. PAST CONTINUOUS



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Expemo code:

1EMD-81LE-2E5

1

Presentation

The **past simple** and the **past continuous** tenses are used to talk about the past.

We use the **past simple** to talk about a completed event in the past:

Yesterday, I **had** breakfast.

Last summer, I **went** to Italy.

We use the **past continuous** to talk about a past activity that was in progress at a particular time in the past:

At 8 am, I **was eating** breakfast.

'Where were you last night?' 'I **was sleeping**.'

We use the **past simple** and **past continuous** to talk about a completed past event that happened when another activity was in progress:

It **started** to rain while I **was walking** in the park.

I **was watching** TV when the phone **rang**.

What **were** you **doing** when he **arrived**?

Dialogue

A: I **called** you earlier, but you **didn't answer**.

B: I'm sorry, I **was playing** the guitar when the phone **rang**.



2

Practice 1

Complete the sentences using the correct form of the past continuous tense of the verbs in brackets:

1. Joanne _____ (make) breakfast when Peter called.
2. While he _____ (do) the dishes, he ran out of washing up liquid.
3. They decided to go to the beach while the sun _____ (still/shine)
4. I called you this morning, but you didn't answer the phone. _____ (you/take) a shower?
5. At 8pm last night, Mario _____ (not/do) his homework. He _____ (play) computer games instead!
6. John had a car accident while he _____ (drive) to work. He _____ (talk) on his mobile when he reversed into a tree.

3

Practice 2

Self-study: Make sentences about you using the past continuous.

Class activity: Work in pairs. Ask your partner what he or she was doing at the specific times mentioned below:

Example: At 8am yesterday, I *was having breakfast*.

What were you doing at 8am yesterday? I *was having breakfast*.

8am yesterday

midday yesterday

4:30pm yesterday

9pm last night

midnight last night

7:00 this morning

4

Practice 3

Complete the sentences using the correct form of the past continuous or past simple tense of the verbs in brackets:

1. What film _____ (you/watch) when I _____ (call) you last night?
2. While he _____ (jog) in the park, a dog _____ (bite) him on the leg.
3. I _____ (see) Adam again in the park this morning. He _____ (walk) his dog.
4. You _____ (not/hear) me get home last night because you _____ (sleep).
5. John _____ (not/take) his umbrella with him last night because it _____ (not/rain).
6. Mr. Lee _____ (work) so hard that he _____ (fall) asleep at his desk.
7. While they _____ (swim), Sam _____ (spot) a dangerous shark. They quickly _____ (swim) back to the shore and _____ (alert) the lifeguard.
8. _____ (you/have) lunch when I _____ (call) your office yesterday?



9. _____ (anyone/call) when I _____ (cook) dinner?
10. I _____ (not/have) time to email you because I _____ (study) for my French exam.
11. When Abdul _____ (arrive) home, his brother _____ (listen) to some music.
12. Mario _____ (have) an accident while he _____ (ski). Fortunately it _____ (not/be) serious.
13. I _____ (see) you this morning on the street, but I _____ (can/not) say hello to you because you _____ (walk) too fast.