

Past Simple vs Past Continuous

Task 1

Circle the correct tenses.

1 What **were you doing / did you do** at 10 o'clock last night?

2 The sun **was shining / shone** while Jim and Tony **were walking / walked** in the park.

3 Andrew **made / was making** his costume for the fancy dress party while Liz **prepared / was preparing** the food.

4 Andy **was talking / talked** on the phone when Vicky **was walking / walked** into the room.

5 Anne **didn't hear / wasn't hearing** the phone ring because the children **made / were making** a lot of noise.

6 Ben **was joining / joined** the school football team.

7 Mark **was driving / drive** to work when his car **was breaking / broke** down.

8 **Did you see / Were you seeing** Suzy at the food festival?

Task 2

Choose the correct answer.

1 they watching the parade this afternoon?
A Was B Did C Were

2 What at 9:00 last night?
A were you doing B you were doing
C did you do

3 Tom reading at 3:00 today.
A didn't B wasn't C weren't

4 I some amazing costumes at the carnival.
A was seeing B saw
C were seeing

5 Grace and Sammy all night at the party.
A dancing B was dancing
C were dancing

6 sleeping when I called you yesterday?
A Was you B Were you C You were

7 Mark sat down and to the band.
A listened B was listening
C were listening

8 to the food festival last week?
A Were you going B You went
C Did you go

9 My parents were sitting in the garden while we a DVD.
A was watching B were watching
C watched

10 her costume for the parade this afternoon? Yes, she was.
A Was Sally making B Did Sally make
C Sally was making

11 Stuart was taking photos at the party everyone else was dancing.
A then B while C so

12 at 3:00 this afternoon?
A Were your parents sleeping
B Did your parents sleep
C Your parents were sleeping

Task 3 Match the sentences to the corresponding rules. Write only the letter of the rule

Sentence	Rule
1. She was reading a book when the phone rang.	
2. They visited their grandparents last weekend.	
3. The children were playing outside while it was raining lightly.	
4. He finished his homework and then went to bed.	
5. The ground was shaking as the earthquake started.	
6. I lost my keys yesterday while I was walking in the park.	
7. The sun was shining brightly when we arrived at the beach.	
8. People were shouting during the fire alarm this morning.	

Rules:

- A. Past simple for an action which happened at a stated or implied time in the past.
- B. Past simple for the other action which happened immediately one after the other in the past.
- C. Past continuous for an action which was in progress at a stated time in the past.
- D. Past continuous for a past action which was in progress when another action interrupted it (use past continuous for the longer action and past simple for the shorter action).
- E. Past continuous to give background information in a story.
- F. Past continuous for two or more actions which were happening at the same time in the past.

Task 4

**Put the verbs in brackets
into the correct tense.**

- 1 All her friends **(dance)** when Jane **(arrive)** at the party.
- 2 They **(watch)** a fireworks display when it **(start)** raining.
- 3 Annie **(leave)** the house, **(get)** into her car and
(drive) to her aunt's house.
- 4 When he **(arrive)** at the festival, everyone **(watch)** the parade.
- 5 She **(see)** her friend Margie while she **(walk)** in the park.
- 6 The children **(paint)** their faces before the street party yesterday.
- 7 What **(you/do)** at 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon?
- 8 Mum **(cook)** dinner at 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon while
Dad **(wash)** the car.

Task 5

Put the verbs in brackets into the correct tense.

Hi Tanya!

How are you? I 1) (have) a fantastic time at the town festival last weekend. In the morning, we all 2) (watch) a parade. I really 3) (enjoy) it. Two of my friends 4) (march) in it. One 5) (play) the trumpet in a band while the other 6) (dance) on a float. Everyone 7) (wear) really smart uniforms or colourful costumes. In the afternoon, we 8) (go) for a walk through the town and 9) (see) different music and dance performances. We 10) (stay) out until 10pm and the streets 11) (be) still crowded!

Write back soon and tell me all about your weekend!

Zoe



Task 6

Put the verbs in brackets into the *past simple* or the *past continuous*.

- A: We 1) (have) a picnic in the park on Sunday when it 2) (start) raining heavily.
B: What a shame! What 3) (you/do)?
A: We quickly 4) (put) everything in the car and 5) (go) home.
- A: What time 6) (you/arrive) at the party?
B: At about 9:00. Everyone 7) (dance) and 8) (eat) when I 9) (get) there.
- A: What 10) (Tom and Sue/do) while you 11) (speak) to me on the phone?
B: They 12) (watch) TV.

Task 7

Put the verbs in brackets into the *past continuous* or the *past simple*.

- 1 We **(watch)** the parade at 11:00 yesterday.
- 2 What dress **(you/wear)** to the party?
- 3 He **(not/go)** to the parade.
- 4 At the festival, Sam **(sing)** while Ann **(take)** photographs.
- 5 When **(the circus/come)** to town?
- 6 **(your mother/make)** this delicious cake?
- 7 What **(you/do)** at 4:00 yesterday?
- 8 She **(cook)** when Tim **(arrive)**.
