PAST CONTINUOUS + SIMPLE PAST

We often use the Past Continuous with the Simple Past when a long action is interrupted by a short action. We use the words WHILE or WHEN to join the ideas.

WHILE + long action (past continuous): I was watching TV (this action was in progress)
WHEN + short action (simple past): the earthquake started (this action interrupted)

There are 4 basic combinations:

While	Past Continuous	,	Simple Past
When	Simple Past	,	Past Continuous
	Simple Past	while	Past Continuous
	Past Continuous	when	Simple Past

EXAMPLES:

While I was watching TV, the earthquake started.
When the earthquake started, I was watching TV.
The earthquake started while I was watching TV.
I was watching TV when the earthquake started.

ACTIVITY 1. Complete the sentences with SIMPLE PAST or PAST CONTINUOUS of the verbs in parenthesis.

1. We _____(play) football when the rain _____(start).
2. He _____(break) the vase while he _____ (play) ball at home.
3. My mom _____(come) in while I _____(surf) on the net.
4. Sandra_____(run) when she _____(fall) down the stairs.
5. I_____(play) golf when it_____(begin) to rain.
6. While she_____(read) a novel, her sister_____(turn off) the lights.
7. They_____(walk) along the beach when they_____(see) the accident.
8. We_____(study) in the library when we_____(hear) a scary voice.
9. While she_____(do) the ironing, her husband_____(set) the table.
10. Ricardo and I _____(dance) when he_____(fall).
11. When the thieve_____(fall) down the tree, he_____(hide) from the police.
12. I_____(wait) outside the hospital when I_____(hear) the bad news.
13. She_____(cry) when I_____(see) her.
14. My parents_____(sit) in the garden while we_____(play) badminton.
15. Bob_____(lie) in the garden when it_____(start) to rain.
16. What _____you_____(do) when Daniel _____(fall)?
17. I_____(talk) to costumer service when the postman_____(deliver) my package!
18. While I_____(swim) in the river, I_____(see) some frogs.
19. Jim_____(send) a message when he_____(crash) his car into a tree.
20. When I _____(put) the baby down, the phone _____(rang).

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ACTIVITY 2. Complete the sentences with while or when.

1. We were playing basketball _____ it began to rain.
2. The dog was barking _____ we were sleeping.
3. I was watching TV _____ she called.
4. _____the phone rang, she was writing a letter.
5. _____we were having the picnic, it started to rain.
6. What were you doing _____ the earthquake started?
7. You were not listening to me _____ I told you to turn the oven off.
8. John was sleeping last night _____ someone stole his car.
9. I was just getting into the bath _____ the telephone rang.
10. Were you listening _____ he was talking?
11. _____ Ellen was reading, Tim was watching television.
12. _____ she came home from school she really didn't look well.

ACTIVITY 3. Complete the text with past simple or past continuous.

Today _____ (not be) not a good day. First, my alarm clock _____ (not ring). Then, while I _____ (have) a shower, my dad _____ (go) to work so I had to walk to school. It _____ (rain) and I got very wet. When I _____ (arrive) to the classroom everyone _____ (study) in silence. The teacher _____ (look) at me and said, 'Good afternoon, Luis. How nice of you to join us.' Everyone _____ (laugh). I_____ (be) so embarrassed.

ACTIVITY 4. In a Google Doc write a similar anecdote.

- ✓ Write between 80 to 100 words.
- ✓ Use Simple Past and Past Continuous with when or while if necessary.
- ✓ Use connectors to join your ideas.
- ✓ Include the following:
  - When did it happened?
  - What happened?
  - How did you feel?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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