

## Past continuous

*I can use the past continuous.*

- 1 Read the opening paragraph of a story. Why does the narrator notice the tall man?



With my backpack in my hands, I stepped off the train onto the crowded platform. It was 7.30 in the evening. People were hurrying home. A mother and her two young children were sitting on a bench. The mother was talking to the boy, but he wasn't looking at her. The girl was singing quietly and playing with a toy. Around them, travellers were shouting greetings, waving goodbye, carrying heavy bags or running to catch trains. A very tall man was standing completely still near the exit. Why was he wearing summer clothes in this weather? And why was he looking straight at me?

- 2 Read the **Learn this!** box. Then find all the examples of the past continuous in the text in exercise 1.

**LEARN THIS!** Past continuous

- a** We often use the past continuous to set the scene.  
*It was snowing. Two men were walking towards the house.*
- b** We use the past continuous to talk about an action that was in progress at a particular time.  
*At midnight, I was doing my homework.*
- c** When we use the past continuous with two or more actions, we do not need to repeat the subject (*I, we, etc.*) or *was / were* if the subject is the same.  
*We were sitting on the sofa and eating pizza.*

➔ Grammar Builder 2B page 120

- 3 Complete the paragraph below with the past continuous form of the verbs in brackets. Do not repeat the subject or *was / were* if they are not necessary.

I left the hotel early the next morning. Already, the sun  
1 \_\_\_\_\_ (shine) brightly and the temperature  
2 \_\_\_\_\_ (rise). In the square, café owners  
3 \_\_\_\_\_ (carry) tables outside. A dog 4 \_\_\_\_\_  
(lie) on the pavement nearby, but it 5 \_\_\_\_\_ (not sleep).  
Two teenage girls 6 \_\_\_\_\_ (sit) on a bench  
7 \_\_\_\_\_ (share) headphones. What 8 \_\_\_\_\_  
(they / listen) to?

- 4 **SPEAKING** Work in pairs. Ask and answer questions about the people in the texts in exercises 1 and 3.

What were they doing?

- |                        |                     |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 the mother           | 5 the tall man      |
| 2 the boy              | 6 the café owners   |
| 3 the girl             | 7 the dog           |
| 4 the other travellers | 8 the teenage girls |

What was the mother doing?

She was ...

- 5 Imagine that yesterday you arrived in the centre of a new city. Write sentences in the past continuous to describe the scene. Use the words below or your own ideas.

*A tourist was reading a book.*

a tourist  
some birds  
two taxi drivers  
a street vendor  
a police officer  
some schoolchildren  
a shop owner  
some workmen  
some shoppers

stand / sit  
argue / fight  
take photos  
eat / drink  
talk on the phone  
read a book / magazine  
laugh / smile / sing  
walk / run / ride a bike

- 6 Work in pairs. Swap the sentences you wrote in exercise 5. Choose three of your partner's sentences and write a question about each one using the past continuous.

*A tourist was reading a book.*

What book was the tourist reading?

- 7 **SPEAKING** Ask and answer the questions you wrote in exercise 6.

What book was the tourist reading?

A travel guide to the city.

- 8 Write the opening paragraph of a story. Use your ideas from exercise 5 and include the extra information from exercise 7.

- 9 **SPEAKING** Read your paragraph to the class. The class decides which is the best opening and why.

## 2B Past continuous

1 Complete the sentences. Use the past continuous form of the verbs in brackets. ➔ 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4

- At eight o'clock yesterday evening, Josh \_\_\_\_\_ (text) his girlfriend.
- 'Why \_\_\_\_\_ they \_\_\_\_\_ (laugh) at me?'
- You \_\_\_\_\_ (not pay) attention while I \_\_\_\_\_ (speak), were you?
- Dave \_\_\_\_\_ (walk) down the street, \_\_\_\_\_ (eat) a sandwich.
- Emma \_\_\_\_\_ (watch) TV and Lisa \_\_\_\_\_ (read) a magazine.
- At midnight, Wendy \_\_\_\_\_ still \_\_\_\_\_ (do) her homework.

2 Complete the text with the past continuous form of the verbs below. ➔ 2.1, 2.2, 2.3

get make put shine sing talk

It was a beautiful morning. The sun <sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ and the birds <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. We <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ ready to go to the beach. Dad <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ our bags in the car and Mum and Tom <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ sandwiches in the kitchen. I <sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ to my friend on the phone.

3 Complete the dialogue with the past continuous form of the verbs in brackets. ➔ 2.1, 2.2, 2.3

- Policeman What <sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (you / do) at 9 o'clock yesterday evening?
- Woman I <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (watch) TV in the living room.
- Policeman What <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (you / watch)?
- Woman Er ... I can't remember. I <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (not pay) attention. I was sleepy.
- Policeman What <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (your husband / do) at that time?
- Woman He <sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (make) chicken pie in the kitchen.
- Policeman How do you know?
- Woman Because our dog <sup>7</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (go crazy). He loves the smell of chicken!

4 What were you doing last Saturday at these times? Write sentences. ➔ 2.1, 2.2, 2.3

- |           |              |
|-----------|--------------|
| 1 7 a.m.  | 4 6 p.m.     |
| 2 10 a.m. | 5 9 p.m.     |
| 3 1 p.m.  | 6 11.30 p.m. |

At 7 a.m., I was having a shower.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## 2D Contrast: past simple and past continuous

5 Complete the sentences with the past simple or past continuous form of the verbs in brackets. ➔ 2.5, 2.6

- When Molly \_\_\_\_\_ (drop) her phone on the floor, it \_\_\_\_\_ (break).
- When my parents \_\_\_\_\_ (get) home, they \_\_\_\_\_ (find) a mouse in the kitchen.
- Martin \_\_\_\_\_ (not hear) the phone because he \_\_\_\_\_ (have) a shower.
- At 8 p.m. last night, I \_\_\_\_\_ (sit) at my desk but I \_\_\_\_\_ (not work).
- When I \_\_\_\_\_ (see) Ben and Tia, they \_\_\_\_\_ (sit) on a bench, \_\_\_\_\_ (laugh) and \_\_\_\_\_ (chat).
- It was a warm afternoon, but the sun \_\_\_\_\_ (not shine).
- While we \_\_\_\_\_ (take) my grandmother to hospital, our car \_\_\_\_\_ (break down).
- I \_\_\_\_\_ (lose) my watch while we \_\_\_\_\_ (play) volleyball in the park.

6 Complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first. ➔ 2.5, 2.6

- While we were having dinner, my dad arrived home. We \_\_\_\_\_ when my dad \_\_\_\_\_.
- I was trying to sleep when the phone rang. The \_\_\_\_\_ while I \_\_\_\_\_.
- She was climbing up some rocks when she fell. As she \_\_\_\_\_, she \_\_\_\_\_.
- While you were shopping, I tidied your room. You \_\_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_\_.
- The boat hit some rocks as it was sailing towards the shore. The boat was \_\_\_\_\_ when it \_\_\_\_\_.

7 Complete the text with the past simple or past continuous form of the verbs in brackets. ➔ 2.5, 2.6, 2.7

It was past midnight when Helen <sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (arrive) home. She <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (close) the door quietly because her parents <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (sleep) upstairs. As she <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (take off) her coat, she <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (see) a letter on the floor with her name on it. She <sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (open) the letter and <sup>7</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (read) it. Then she <sup>8</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (put) it in her pocket, <sup>9</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (pick up) her coat and <sup>10</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (go) out again. It <sup>11</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (be) a cold night but it <sup>12</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (not rain). A few people <sup>13</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (walk) towards the High Street, so Helen <sup>14</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (cross) the road and <sup>15</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (follow) them. She <sup>16</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (not know) where they <sup>17</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (go) - but she <sup>18</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (not want) to be alone.