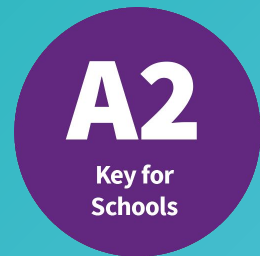


GOLD

experience



Unit 5 – past continuous

The past continuous

Let's look at:

1. When we use the past continuous.
2. The past continuous versus the past simple.
3. How we make sentences in the past continuous.



When do we use it?

1. Function: When do we use it?



I called you last night at 10 o'clock, but you didn't answer. What were you doing?

I was sleeping at 10 o'clock when you called me, sorry! I was very tired.



Look at the sentence again: '*I was sleeping when you called.*' There are two actions here:

1. I was sleeping.
2. You called.

We know '*I was sleeping*' was an action in progress. Did the second action ('*you called*') happen before, after or during?

During.

Look at what the boy says: '*I was sleeping at 10 o'clock.*' Do you think the action started before 10 o'clock and continued after 10 o'clock? So, was the action completed at 10 o'clock or in progress?

Yes, so it was in progress.

The past.



Look at the conversation. Are they talking about the past or the present?

Function: When do we use the past continuous?



1. For actions in progress at a specific time in the past.

I was sleeping at 10 o'clock.

This is a specific time in the past. Other examples are time expressions like *this morning*, *last night*.

The boy started sleeping before 10 o'clock and continued sleeping after 10 o'clock. It was in progress. It wasn't completed at this specific time.

2. For actions in progress when another action happened in the past.

I was sleeping when you called.

Notice how this action is in the past simple.

We use the linking word *when* to connect the two parts of the sentence.

2. Function: When do we use it?



[Reading a book:] It was a cold dark night and it was raining outside. The trees were moving in the wind and the animals were hiding from the cold.

The past continuous.

Do you think we usually use the past continuous or the past simple for the main events?

The past simple.

It is setting the scene.

Do we use the past simple here to set the scene or the past continuous?



Look at the section from a story above. Do you think this is one of the main events in the story or is it setting the scene?

Function: When do we use the past continuous?



1. For actions in progress at a specific time in the past

I was sleeping at 10 o'clock.

This is a specific time in the past. Other examples are time expressions like *this morning*, *last night*.

The boy started sleeping before 10 o'clock and continued sleeping after 10 o'clock. It was in progress. It wasn't completed at this specific time.

2. For actions in progress when another action happened in the past.

I was sleeping when you called.

Notice how this action is in the past simple.

We use the linking word *when* to connect the two parts of the sentence.

2. To set the scene in a story in the past.

It was raining outside. The trees were moving in the wind and the animals were hiding from the cold.

We usually use the past simple with the main events.

How do we make sentences in the past continuous?

Form: How do we make sentences?



positive

e.g. It was raining.

? ? verb -ing

negative

e.g. I wasn't working.

? ? ?

question

e.g. What were you doing?

? to be (past) subject verb -ing

e.g. Was he playing golf?

to be (past) ? verb -ing

Complete the tables with the words below. Look at the examples to help you. The first one is done for you.

subjec t	subjec t	qu. word subjec ↑ to be (past)
not to be (past)		verb -ing

Form: How do we make sentences?



positive

e.g. It was raining.

subject **to be (past)** **verb -ing**

t

Now look at the short answers. Complete the table.

negative

e.g. I wasn't working.

subject **not to be (past)** **verb -ing**

t

How do we make the verb *to be* in the past?

I was, you were, he/she/it was, we were, you (pl.) were, they were

to be (past)

subject

question

e.g. What were you doing?

qu. word **to be (past)** **subject** **verb -ing**

e.g. Was he playing golf?

to be (past) **subject** **verb -ing**

t

short answers

e.g. Yes, he was.
No, he wasn't.

Yes/No, **?** **?**

Form: How do we make sentences?



positive

e.g. It was raining.

subject

***to be* (past)**

verb -ing

Remember. This is how we make the verb *to be* in the past.

subject	<i>to be</i>
I	was
you	were
he/she/it	was
we	were
you (pl.)	were
they	were

Be careful with spelling. The *-ing* forms can change a little, e.g. *swim* – *swimming*.

negative

e.g. I wasn't working.

subject

***not to be* (past)**

verb -ing

question

e.g. What were you doing?

qu. word

***to be* (past)**

subject

verb -ing

e.g. Was he playing golf?

***to be* (past)**

subject

verb -ing

short answers

e.g. Yes, he was.
No, he wasn't.

Yes/No,

subject

verb to be (past)

Let's practise!

Practice activities

Correct the errors.

was singing

1. My brother ~~singing~~ in a competition last night.

were you

2. What ~~you were~~ doing when I saw you yesterday?

was cooking arrived

3. I ~~cooked~~ when you ~~were~~ arriving.

were

4. My best friend and her father ~~was~~ travelling when they met a really famous actor.

were

5. It was 4pm. My friends ~~was~~ walking home from school.

wasn't

6. Diana ~~didn't~~ doing her homework when I called her.