

Unit 6

Past continuous (I was doing)

A Study this example situation:



Yesterday Karen and Jim played tennis. They started at 10 o'clock and finished at 11.30.

So, at 10.30 they **were playing** tennis.

They **were playing** = they were in the middle of playing. They had not finished playing.

Was/were -ing is the *past continuous*:

I/he/she/it	was	playing
we/you/they	were	doing
		working etc.

B **I was doing** something = I was in the middle of doing something at a certain time. The action or situation had already started before this time, but had not finished:



- This time last year I **was living** in Brazil.
- What **were you doing** at 10 o'clock last night?
- I waved to Helen, but she **wasn't looking**.

C Compare the *past continuous* (I was doing) and *past simple* (I did):

Past continuous (in the middle of an action)

- I **was walking** home when I met Dan. (in the middle of walking home)
- Kate **was watching** TV when we arrived.

Past simple (complete action)

- I **walked** home after the party last night. (= all the way, completely)
- Kate **watched** television a lot when she was ill last year.

D We often use the past simple and the past continuous together to say that something happened in the middle of something else:

- Matt **phoned** while we **were having** dinner.
- It **was raining** when I **got** up.
- I **saw** you in the park yesterday. You **were sitting** on the grass and **reading** a book.
- I **hurt** my back while I **was working** in the garden.

But we use the past simple to say that one thing happened after another:

- I **was walking** along the road when I **saw** Dan. So I **stopped**, and we **had** a chat.

Compare:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> When Karen arrived, we were having dinner. (= we had already started before she arrived) | <input type="checkbox"/> When Karen arrived, we had dinner. (= Karen arrived, and then we had dinner) |
|--|--|

E Some verbs (for example, **know** and **want**) are not normally used in the continuous (see Unit 4A):

- We were good friends. We **knew** each other well. (*not* We were knowing)
- I was enjoying the party, but Chris **wanted** to go home. (*not* was wanting)

Exercises

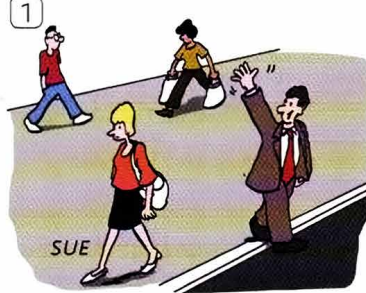

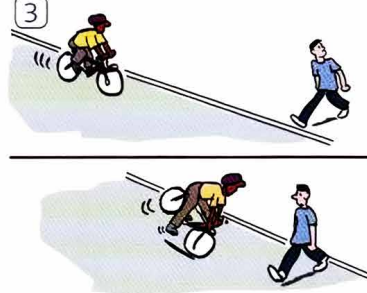
6.1 What were you doing at these times? Write sentences as in the examples. The past continuous is not always necessary (see the second example).

- 1 (at 8 o'clock yesterday evening) I was having dinner.
- 2 (at 5 o'clock last Monday) I was on a bus on my way home.
- 3 (at 10.15 yesterday morning)
- 4 (at 4.30 this morning)
- 5 (at 7.45 yesterday evening)
- 6 (half an hour ago)

6.2 Use your own ideas to complete the sentences. Use the past continuous.

- 1 Matt phoned while we were having dinner.
- 2 The doorbell rang while I
- 3 The car began to make a strange noise when we
- 4 Jessica fell asleep while she
- 5 The television was on, but nobody

6.3 Put the verb into the correct form, past continuous or past simple.

<p>1</p>  <p>I <u>saw</u> (see) Sue in town yesterday, but she</p> <p>She (not / see) me.</p> <p>She (look) the other way.</p>	<p>2</p>  <p>I (meet) Tom and Jane at the airport a few weeks ago. They</p> <p>..... (go) to Paris and I (go) to Rome. We (have) a chat while we</p> <p>..... (wait) for our flights.</p>	<p>3</p>  <p>I (cycle) home yesterday when a man</p> <p>..... (step) out into the road in front of me. I</p> <p>..... (go) quite fast, but luckily I (manage) to stop in time and</p> <p>..... (not / hit) him.</p>
---	---	--

6.4 Put the verb into the correct form, past continuous or past simple.

- 1 Jenny was waiting (wait) for me when I arrived (arrive).
- 2 'What (you / do) at this time yesterday?' 'I was asleep.'
- 3 '..... (you / go) out last night?' 'No, I was too tired.'
- 4 How fast (you / drive) when the accident (happen)?
- 5 Sam (take) a picture of me while I
- 6 We were in a very difficult position. We (not / know) what to do.
- 7 I haven't seen Alan for ages. When I last (see) him, he
- 8 I (try) to find a job.
- 8 I (walk) along the street when suddenly I (hear) footsteps behind me. Somebody (follow) me. I was scared and I (start) to run.
- 9 When I was young, I (want) to be a pilot.
- 10 Last night I (drop) a plate when I (do) the washing-up. Fortunately it (not / break).

Present perfect 1 (I have done)

A Study this example situation:



Tom is looking for his key. He can't find it.

He **has lost** his key.

He **has lost** his key = He lost it recently, and he still doesn't have it.

Have/has lost is the *present perfect simple*:

I/we/they/you	have (= I've etc.)	finished
		lost
he/she/it	has (= he's etc.)	done
		been etc.

The present perfect simple is **have/has + past participle**. The past participle often ends in **-ed** (finished/decided etc.), but many important verbs are *irregular* (lost/done/written etc.).

For a list of irregular verbs, see Appendix 1.

B When we say that 'something **has happened**', this is usually new information:

- Ow! I've cut my finger.
- The road is closed. There's been (there **has been**) an accident.
- (from the news) Police **have arrested** two men in connection with the robbery.

When we use the present perfect, there is a connection with *now*. The action in the past has a result *now*:

- 'Where's your key?' 'I don't know. I've lost it.' (= I don't have it *now*)
- He told me his name, but I've forgotten it. (= I can't remember it *now*)
- 'Is Sally here?' 'No, she's gone out.' (= she is out *now*)
- I can't find my bag. **Have you seen** it? (= Do you know where it is *now*?)

C Note the difference between **gone (to)** and **been (to)**:

- James is on holiday. He **has gone to** Italy. (= he is there now or on his way there)
- Jane is back home now. She **has been to** Italy. (= she has now come back)

D You can use the present perfect with **just**, **already** and **yet**.

Just = a short time ago:

- 'Are you hungry?' 'No, I've just had lunch.'
- Hello. **Have you just arrived**?

We use **already** to say that something happened sooner than expected:

- 'Don't forget to pay your electricity bill.' 'I've already paid it.'
- 'What time is Mark leaving?' 'He's already left.'

Yet = until now. **Yet** shows that the speaker is expecting something to happen. Use **yet** only in questions and negative sentences:

- Has it stopped** raining **yet**?
- I've written the email, but I **haven't sent** it **yet**.

E You can also use the past simple (**did**, **went**, **had** etc.) in the examples on this page. So you can say:

- 'Is Sally here?' 'No, she **went** out.' or 'No, she's **gone** out.'
- 'Are you hungry?' 'No, I **just had** lunch.' or 'No, I've **just had** lunch.'