

Past continuous/progressive

The past continuous/progressive is used to refer to an action that was continuous (i.e. an action that was going on at a particular time in the past)

Read the passage:

Yesterday, Rosa and Jim played Tennis; they began at 10:00 and finished at 11:30.

They **were playing**: the action had not finished yet. \implies Past continuous.

The form of the past continuous: it is formed as follow:

To be (simple past) + verb + ing

1. The affirmative form:

I, She, He, It \implies was playing

You, We, They \implies were playing

Examples:

- Yesterday evening I **was watching** a film when someone knocked the door.
- This morning **I was revising** my lesson when my father came in.

2. The interrogative form:

Was I, she, he, **it playing?**

Were they, we, you **playing?**

Examples:

What **were you doing** yesterday morning?

What **were Jim and Rosa doing?**

3. The negative form:

I, she, he, it \implies was not/wasn't playing

You, we, they \implies were not/weren't playing

Examples:

- I wasn't reading** a book yesterday evening, I was watching a film.
- My mother **wasn't preparing** dinner; she was working on the computer.

Note:

This time yesterday, I was doing my homework. \implies We use the past continuous to say that something happened in the middle of something else.

Eg: Bob burnt his hand when he **was cooking** dinner yesterday.

Exercise

Change the verb into the correct form:

1. Yesterday at 5 o'clock I (eat).
2. Last night, at 10 o'clock she (dance).
3. Tim (cook) while Susan (watch) TV.
4. Barbara (paint), and Joe (sleep).
5. While you (rest), I (clean) the house.
6. While we (swim), the other team (run).
7. Jim (always come) late to work.
8. Dorothy (always smoke) in the room.
9. Jack and Bob (always fight) about something.
10. These two (constantly chat).
11. James (read) and Emily (listen) to music.
12. While the singer (sing), the crowd (jump).
13. The teacher (sleep), and the students (laugh).
14. An hour ago I (jog).
15. They (always drink) too much at parties.