

# English Grammar For Second Year Students

English Dep.  
College of Basic Education  
University of Diyala  
First Course  
Based on  
English Grammar in Use  
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Presented  
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# Unit 6: Past continuous

## (I was doing)

The form of the past continuous tense is

Be + the -ing form of the verb (present participle)

Be (was , were) + verb + ing

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

Study this example situation:



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

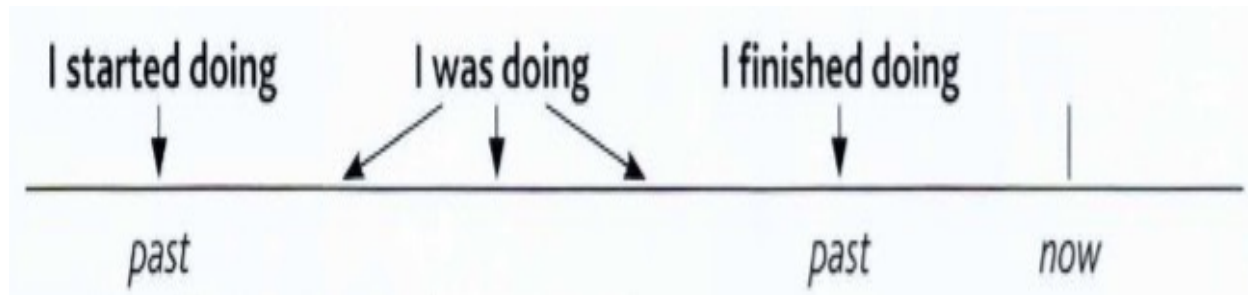
So, at 10.30 they **were playing** tennis.

They **were playing** = they **were in the middle of playing**.

They **had not finished playing**.

# Uses of the past continuous tense

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**.

# 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.

The past simple and the past continuous can be used 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.

The past simple is used 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:

**When Karen arrived, we were having dinner.**

(= we had already started before she arrived)

**When Karen arrived, we had dinner.**

(= Karen arrived, and then we had dinner)

Some verbs (for example, **know** and **want**) **are not normally used in the continuous**

- 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**)



# THE EXERCISES



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) **I was working.**
- 4 (at 4.30 this morning) **I was in bed asleep.**
- 5 (at 7.45 yesterday evening) **I was getting ready to go out.**
- 6 (half an hour ago) **I was watching TV. At home**



# THE EXERCISES



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 *was having a shower.*
- 3 The car began to make a strange noise when we *were having home.*
- 4 Jessica fell asleep while she *was reading the paper.*
- 5 The television was on, but nobody *was watching it.*





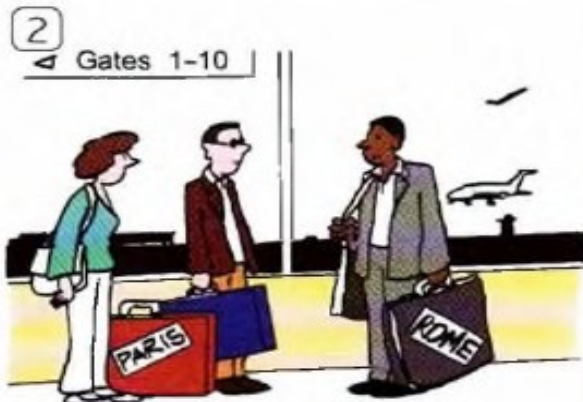
# THE EXERCISES



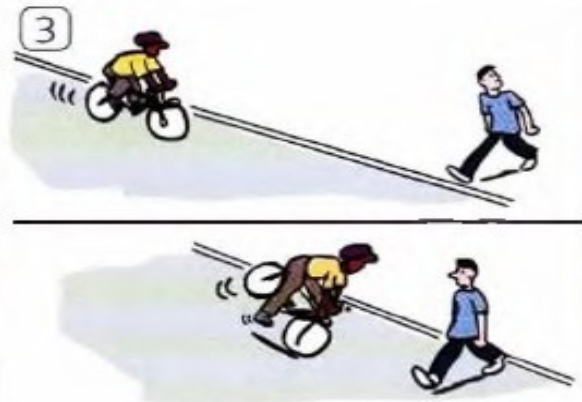
Put the verb into the correct form, past continuous or past simple.



I saw (see) Sue in town yesterday, but she didn't (not / see) me. She was looking (look) the other way.



I met (meet) Tom and Jane at the airport a few weeks ago. They were going (go) to Paris and I was going (go) to Rome. We had (have) a chat while we were waiting (wait) for our flights.



I was cycling (cycle) home yesterday when a man stepped (step) out into the road in front of me. I was going (go) quite fast, but luckily I managed (manage) to stop in time and didn't hit (not / hit) him.





# THE EXERCISES



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 Were you doing (you / do) at this time yesterday?' 'I was asleep.'
- 3 'Did you go (you / go) out last night?' 'No, I was too tired.'
- 4 How fast were you driving (you / drive) when the accident happened (happen)?
- 5 Sam took (take) a picture of me while I wasn't looking (not / look).
- 6 We were in a very difficult position. We didn't know (not / know) what to do.
- 7 I haven't seen Alan for ages. When I last saw (see) him, he was trying (try) to find a job.
- 8 I was walking (walk) along the street when suddenly I heard (hear) footsteps behind me. Somebody was following (follow) me. I was scared and I started (start) to run.
- 9 When I was young, I wanted (want) to be a pilot.
- 10 Last night I dropped (drop) a plate when I was doing (do) the washing-up. Fortunately it didn't break (not / break).

Thank You