

## Past Continuous Tense

**Structure: S + to be (was/were) + V ing + C**

The Past Continuous Tense is used in different situations:

1. Use the Past Continuous **to indicate that a longer action in the past was interrupted**. The interruption is usually a shorter action in the Simple Past. Remember this can be a real interruption or just an interruption in time.

### USE 1 “Interrupted Action in the Past”



Examples:

- When the *phone rang*, she **was writing** a letter.
  - What **were** you **doing** when the *earthquake started*?
  - I **was listening** to my iPod, so I didn't hear the fire alarm.
  - While John **was sleeping** last night, *someone stole* his car.
2. When you use the Past Continuous with **two actions in the same sentence**, it expresses the idea that **both actions were happening at the same time**. The actions are parallel.

### USE 3 Parallel Actions

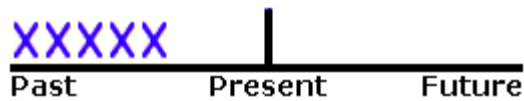


Examples:

- I **was studying** while he **was making** dinner.
- While Ellen **was reading**, Tim **was watching** television.
- **Were** you **listening** while he **was talking**?
- I **wasn't paying** attention while I **was writing** the letter, so I made several mistakes.
- What **were** you **doing** while you **were waiting**?

3. Use the Past Continuous with words such as "**always**" or "**constantly**". This **expresses the idea that something irritating or shocking often happened in the past**. Remember to put the words "always" or "constantly" between "be" and "verb+ing."

### USE 3 Repetition and Irritation with "Always"



Examples:

- She **was always coming** to class late.
- He **was constantly talking**. He annoyed everyone.
- I didn't like them because they **were always complaining**.