

Help Centres – English Support



Past Simple and Past Continuous

Past Simple	Past Continuous
A action that happened in the past: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> My mother read that book last year. 	A longer action in the past that was interrupted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> She was reading a book when the phone rang.
A specific time in the past: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I watched that movie on Thursday 	A longer action that was interrupted by a specific time in the past: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I was watching the movie last night at 9 pm.
An action in the past with 'for' or 'since' when the action has already finished. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I lived in Victoria for five years. 	Describe an activity in the past already happening before/while another in the past: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I was living in Victoria when I met my husband. While I was living in Victoria, I met my husband.
Words we often use with past simple: Last week, night, year etc... yesterday for/since (finished actions)	Words we often use with past continuous: While when at a specific time
Affirmative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I played. Negative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I did not play. Question: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did I play? 	Affirmative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I was playing. Negative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I was not playing. Question: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was I playing?

Practice: Put the verbs in past simple or past continuous in the following sentences.

- He (drive) _____ very fast when the police (stop) _____ him.
- I (buy) _____ a new car last week.
- Last night, I (visit) _____ my sister when you (text) _____ me.
- My husband (work) _____ in a restaurant for many years.
- This morning I (get up) _____ and (make) _____ breakfast for everyone.
- While I (roller-skate) _____, I (fall down) _____ and (scrape) _____ my knee.