

Al-Mustaqbal University College

College of Administrative Sciences

Department of Business Administration

مادة اللغة الانكليزية

5ed Lecture

3ed class

The past continuous tense

BY

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Lecture: Understanding the Past Continuous Tense

The past continuous tense (also called the past progressive tense) is used to describe actions that were happening at a specific time in the past. It focuses on the duration of the action, rather than its completion. In this lecture, we will explore its structure, uses, and common mistakes students make when using it.

1. Structure of the Past Continuous Tense:

The past continuous tense is formed using:

Past Continuous Tense Rules with Examples

I was	+ Ving	play – playing
He was		sleep – sleeping
She was		write – writing
It was		get – getting
We were		
You were		
They were		



- Subject: I / They
- Was/Were: I (was) / They (were) – depending on the subject
- Verb + ing: reading / playing

Affirmative sentences:

- He was watching TV when I called.
- They were studying for the exam last night.
- I was reading a book when the phone rang.

- They were playing football at 4 PM yesterday

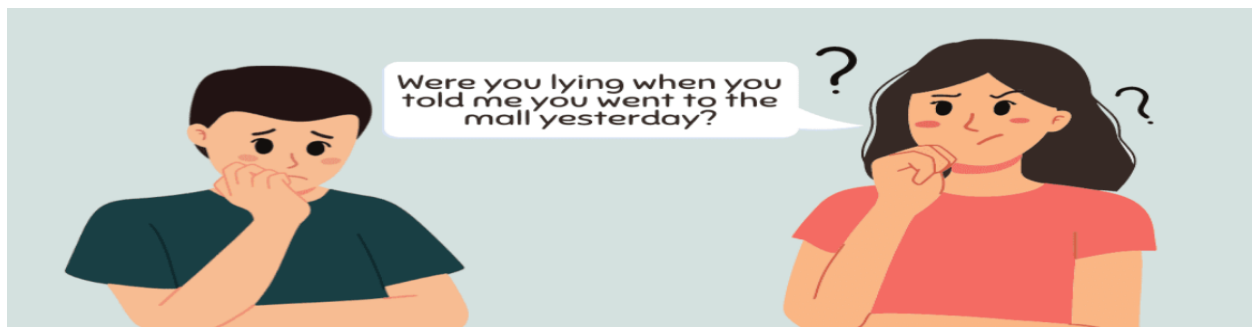
Negative sentences:

To make negative sentences, add "not" after was/were:

- I was not (wasn't) sleeping when you knocked.
- They were not (weren't) listening to the teacher.

Questions:

In questions, reverse the subject and the auxiliary verb (was/were):



- Was she reading a book when you entered?
 - Were they playing football at the park?
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Uses of the Past Continuous Tense:

It is commonly used to describe a longer action that was interrupted by a shorter action in the past (often expressed with the past simple).



- She was reading when the doorbell rang.
 - The longer action (was reading) is interrupted by the shorter action (doorbell rang).
- We were watching a movie when the lights went out.

It can describe two or more actions happening simultaneously in the past.

Past Continuous Tense & Past Simple Tense

I **was watching** TV when Jim **knocked** the door.

Long action = (watching TV),
expressed with past continuous tense



Short action = (knocked),
expressed with simple past tense



- I was watching TV when he knocked the door.

Writers often use the past continuous to set the scene in a story, providing a backdrop for a series of events.

**A stork was bringing a baby
The maid was taking the tray to the
dining room**



Time Expressions Used with the Past Continuous:

Certain time expressions often accompany the past continuous tense to provide context:

- At 3 PM yesterday, I was working on my project.
- While I was studying, my phone rang.
- When the teacher arrived, we were talking.
- All evening, they were playing video games.

Tip: Use "was" with singular subjects (I, he, she, it) and "were" with plural subjects (you, we, they).

She was reading a book.

Tip: Always add -ing to the main verb in the past continuous tense.

She was reading a book.

Tip: Use the past continuous for the longer action (walking) and the past simple for the shorter, interrupting action (saw).

I was walking to the store when I saw him.

The main questions about this lecture

We use the past continuous for theaction

a- Longer b- shorter c- big d- small e- very short

Always add to the main verb in the past continuous tense.

a- er b- es c- est d- ing e- ed

We use with singular subjects in the past continuous tense.

a- were b- was c- are d- is e- does

(when) is a time expression used often with thetense.

a- past continuous b- past c- present d- future e- past simple

I wasa book when the power went out.

a- Read b- reading c- reads d- reader e- road

Shecooking dinner while we were watching TV.

a- was b- were c- is d- are e- will

Theyplaying football at the park all afternoon.

a- was b- were c- is d- are e- will

He wasfor his exam when I called him.

a- Study b- studied c- studying d- studies e- studier

Welistening to music during the entire road trip.

a- was b- were c- is d- are e- will

The kidsrunning around the house when the guests arrived.

a- was b- were c-is d- are e- will

Itaking a shower when the phone rang.

a- was b- were c-is d- are e- will

The dogbarking at the mailman this morning.

a- was b- were c-is d- are e- will

Theylaughing so loudly that everyone turned to look.

a- was b- were c-is d- are e- will

She was painting the living roomher husband was fixing the door.

a- Was b- were c- while d- is e- are