

Past Continuous

A2 Elementary

Student Worksheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

Score: ____ / 56

Exercise 1 — True or False? (8 points)

Read each statement. Write **True** or **False**.

1. We use the Past Continuous with the Simple Past to show an interrupted action.

Answer: _____

2. We use "when" before a Past Continuous verb.

Answer: _____

3. "While" is used to connect two actions that were happening at the same time.

Answer: _____

4. The Simple Past is used for the longer background action.

Answer: _____

5. The Past Continuous can be used to set the scene at the start of a story.

Answer: _____

6. "I was cooking when she called" means the cooking started after she called.

Answer: _____

7. "While he was sleeping, she was working" describes two simultaneous actions.

Answer: _____

8. "When" and "while" always introduce the interrupted (shorter) action.

Answer: _____

Exercise 2 — Multiple Choice (8 points)

Choose the correct form. Circle your answer.

1. I ____ a book when the alarm went off.

(was reading / read / were reading)

2. While she ____ dinner, he was setting the table.

(was making / made / were making)

3. The rain ____ and people were rushing for shelter.

(was falling / fell / were falling)

4. They ____ TV when the power cut happened.

(were watching / watched / was watching)

5. ____ you listening when the teacher explained it?

(Were / Was / Did)

6. While I ____ to work, I saw a car accident.

(was walking / walked / were walking)

7. He ____ his phone when I called — he was driving.

(wasn't using / weren't using / didn't use)

8. The children were playing outside while the adults ____ inside.

(were talking / talked / was talking)

Exercise 3 — Matching (8 points)

Match each sentence (1–8) to the correct use of the Past Continuous (a–h). Write the letter.

Sentences	Uses
1. I was having a bath when the doorbell rang. ____	A. An action in progress interrupted by a shorter event.
2. While he was cooking, she was clearing the table. ____	B. Two longer actions happening at the same time.
3. The sun was shining and birds were singing when we arrived.	C. Background description that sets the scene.
4. She was talking on the phone when I walked in. ____	D. A longer background action interrupted by a shorter one.
5. While I was driving, my passenger was reading the map.	E. Two simultaneous past actions.
6. It was snowing heavily and the roads were icy. ____	F. Scene-setting description at the start of a story.
7. They were all dancing when the music suddenly stopped.	G. An ongoing activity that was interrupted.
8. While the teacher was writing on the board, the students were taking notes.	H. Two longer actions happening at the same time in the past.

Exercise 4 — Gap Fill (8 points)

Choose the correct form from the brackets.

1. I ____ a shower when someone knocked at the door.

(was having / had / were having)

2. While she ____ the report, he was answering emails.

(was writing / wrote / were writing)

3. The wind ____ and leaves were falling from the trees.

(was blowing / blew / were blowing)

4. He ____ his keys when he was leaving the house.

(dropped / was dropping / were dropping)

5. While I ____ breakfast, my phone rang.

(was eating / ate / were eating)

6. They ____ in the garden when it started to rain.

(were sitting / sat / was sitting)

7. The music ____ and everyone was enjoying the party.

(was playing / played / were playing)

8. She ____ TV when she heard the news.

(was watching / watched / were watching)

Exercise 5 — Word Order (8 points)

Put the words in the correct order to make a sentence.

1. reading / was / she / when / I / arrived

2. cooking / he / singing / While / was / she / was

3. when / raining / we / It / left / was

4. when / TV / Were / I / watching / called / you

5. games / studying / was / I / While / was / playing / he

6. and / shining / birds / were / The / singing / sun / was

7. he / not / when / spoke / listening / She / was

8. they / arrived / doing / What / when / you / were

Exercise 6 — Word Sort (8 points)

Write each sentence in the correct column of the table below.

Word bank: She was cooking when the smoke alarm went off. | They were dancing when the music stopped. | I was walking home when I found the wallet. | While he was painting, she was gardening. | While I was ironing, my husband was making lunch. | While the baby was sleeping, I was cleaning the house. | Snow was falling and the streets were empty. | The café was busy and people were laughing and chatting. | It was getting dark and the stars were beginning to appear. | I was go to the shop when I saw him. | She were reading when I arrived. | He was watch TV when she called.

Interrupted Action (when)	Two Actions at Same Time (while)	Setting the Scene	Incorrect Sentence
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Exercise 7 — Complete the Conversation (8 points)

Choose the correct form from the brackets.

A: Did you have a good weekend? What ____ anything special?

(were doing / was doing / did)

B: Yes! On Saturday, while my partner ____ dinner, I was tidying the garden.

(was cooking / cooked / were cooking)

A: Nice! What about Sunday? It ____ all day so we stayed in.

(was raining / rained / were raining)

B: We ____ films when our friends called and invited us out.

(were watching / watched / was watching)

A: Did you go? We ____ ready when they arrived — so yes!

(were getting / got / was getting)

B: And while we ____ at the restaurant, it stopped raining.

(were eating / ate / was eating)

Past Continuous — ANSWER KEY

A2 Elementary

TEACHER ANSWER KEY — Do not distribute to students

Exercise 1 — True or False?

1. We use the Past Continuous with the Simple Past to show an interrupted action.

✓ True

2. We use "when" before a Past Continuous verb.

✓ False

3. "While" is used to connect two actions that were happening at the same time.

✓ True

4. The Simple Past is used for the longer background action.

✓ False

5. The Past Continuous can be used to set the scene at the start of a story.

✓ True

6. "I was cooking when she called" means the cooking started after she called.

✓ False

7. "While he was sleeping, she was working" describes two simultaneous actions.

✓ True

8. "When" and "while" always introduce the interrupted (shorter) action.

✓ False

Exercise 2 — Multiple Choice

1. I ____ a book when the alarm went off.

✓ was reading

2. While she ____ dinner, he was setting the table.

✓ was making

3. The rain ____ and people were rushing for shelter.

✓ was falling

4. They ____ TV when the power cut happened.

✓ were watching

5. ____ you listening when the teacher explained it?

✓ Were

6. While I ____ to work, I saw a car accident.

✓ was walking

7. He ____ his phone when I called — he was driving.

✓ wasn't using

8. The children were playing outside while the adults ____ inside.

✓ were talking

Exercise 3 — Matching

1. I was having a bath when the doorbell rang.

✓ An action in progress interrupted by a shorter event.

2. While he was cooking, she was clearing the table.

✓ Two longer actions happening at the same time.

3. The sun was shining and birds were singing when we arrived.

✓ Background description that sets the scene.

4. She was talking on the phone when I walked in.

✓ A longer background action interrupted by a shorter one.

5. While I was driving, my passenger was reading the map.

✓ Two simultaneous past actions.

6. It was snowing heavily and the roads were icy.

✓ Scene-setting description at the start of a story.

7. They were all dancing when the music suddenly stopped.

✓ An ongoing activity that was interrupted.

8. While the teacher was writing on the board, the students were taking notes.

✓ Two continuous actions happening at the same time in the past.

Exercise 4 — Gap Fill

1. I ____ a shower when someone knocked at the door.

✓ was having

2. While she ____ the report, he was answering emails.

✓ was writing

3. The wind ____ and leaves were falling from the trees.

✓ was blowing

4. He ____ his keys when he was leaving the house.

✓ dropped

5. While I ____ breakfast, my phone rang.

✓ was eating

6. They ____ in the garden when it started to rain.

✓ were sitting

7. The music ____ and everyone was enjoying the party.

✓ was playing

8. She ____ TV when she heard the news.

✓ was watching

Exercise 5 — Word Order

1. ✓ I was reading when she arrived

2. ✓ While he was cooking she was singing

3. ✓ It was raining when we left

4. ✓ Were you watching TV when I called

5. ✓ While I was studying he was playing games

6. ✓ The sun was shining and birds were singing

7. ✓ She was not listening when he spoke

8. ✓ What were they doing when you arrived

Exercise 6 — Word Sort

Interrupted Action (when):

✓ She was cooking when the smoke alarm went off.

✓ They were dancing when the music stopped.

✓ I was walking home when I found the wallet.

Two Actions at Same Time (while):

✓ While he was painting, she was gardening.

✓ While I was ironing, my husband was making lunch.

✓ While the baby was sleeping, I was cleaning the house.

Setting the Scene:

✓ Snow was falling and the streets were empty.

✓ The café was busy and people were laughing and chatting.

✓ It was getting dark and the stars were beginning to appear.

Incorrect Sentence:

✓ I was go to the shop when I saw him.

✓ She were reading when I arrived.

✓ He was watch TV when she called.

Exercise 7 — Complete the Conversation

1. A: Did you have a good weekend? What ____ anything special?

✓ were doing

2. B: Yes! On Saturday, while my partner ____ dinner, I was tidying the garden.

✓ was cooking

3. A: Nice! What about Sunday? It ____ all day so we stayed in.

✓ was raining

4. B: We ____ films when our friends called and invited us out.

✓ were watching

5. A: Did you go? We ____ ready when they arrived — so yes!

✓ were getting

6. B: And while we ____ at the restaurant, it stopped raining.

✓ were eating