

Simple Past vs Past Continuous

A2 Elementary · Lesson 1 · Student Worksheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

Score: _____ / 56

Exercise 1 · Which Tense? (8 points)

Read each sentence. Circle **Simple Past** or **Past Continuous**.

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. She was reading a book when I arrived. | Simple Past / Past Continuous |
| 2. He ran to catch the bus this morning. | Simple Past / Past Continuous |
| 3. They were sitting in the garden all afternoon. | Simple Past / Past Continuous |
| 4. It started to rain during our walk. | Simple Past / Past Continuous |
| 5. I was listening to music when she called. | Simple Past / Past Continuous |
| 6. He sat down and opened his laptop. | Simple Past / Past Continuous |
| 7. She was cooking dinner at seven o'clock. | Simple Past / Past Continuous |
| 8. We drove to the coast last Saturday. | Simple Past / Past Continuous |

Exercise 2 · Multiple Choice (8 points)

Circle the correct verb form.

- I ____ dinner when my friend arrived.
cooked / was cooking / were cooking
- She ____ to music when the alarm went off.
listened / was listening / were listening
- He ____ his car into a tree last night.
drove / was driving / driven
- While they ____ in the park, it started to rain.
ran / were running / was running
- ____ you ____ at the time of the accident?
Were / working / Was / working / Did / work
- She ____ down and started to read her book.
was sitting / sat / sits
- It ____ when we left the house this morning.
rained / was raining / were raining
- While she ____ the report, the computer crashed.

Exercise 3 · Matching (8 points)

Match each sentence (1–8) to its meaning (a–h). Write the letter in the box.

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1. She was cooking dinner when he arrived. | [____] |
| 2. I ran to the station but missed the train. | [____] |
| 3. They were sitting by the fire all evening. | [____] |
| 4. While she was reading, the lights went out. | [____] |
| 5. He drove to the airport and caught his flight. | [____] |
| 6. It was raining when we left the house. | [____] |
| 7. She sat down and opened her notebook. | [____] |
| 8. I was working at my desk when I heard the noise. | [____] |

- g. Two quick completed actions that happened one after the other.
- d. A longer background action was interrupted by a sudden event.
- a. One action was in progress; a second action interrupted it.
- h. An ongoing activity was interrupted by something unexpected.
- f. The weather was already happening as background when we left.
- b. Two completed actions, one immediately after the other.
- c. An action that continued for a long period in the past.
- e. A sequence of two completed actions in the past.

Exercise 4 · Gap Fill (8 points)

Complete each sentence with the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. She _____ a magazine when the phone rang. (*read*)
2. He _____ into the room and stopped suddenly. (*run*)
3. I _____ to the radio when you knocked on the door. (*listen*)
4. While they _____ outside, the storm started. (*sit*)
5. She _____ lunch at one o'clock. (*cook*)
6. He _____ past the school and turned left. (*drive*)
7. It _____ heavily while we walked home. (*rain*)
8. They _____ in the office when the fire alarm went off. (*work*)

Exercise 5 · Word Order (8 points)

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

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

2. He / ran / to / the / station / and / missed / the / train

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

4. While / she / was / cooking / the / phone / rang

5. I / was / listening / to / music / when / you / called

6. He / sat / down / and / opened / his / laptop

7. They / were / sitting / outside / when / it / started / to / rain

8. She / drove / home / while / I / was / still / working

Exercise 6 · Word Sort (8 points)

Write each sentence in the correct column.

It ____ suddenly and everyone got wet. • I ____ to the radio while I made breakfast. • He ____ on the motorway when his tyre went flat. • We ____ hard all day and finished the project. • They ____ in the garden all afternoon. • She ____ down and picked up the letter. • She ____ a book when I knocked on the door. • He ____ up the stairs and shut the door.

Action in progress	Completed action

Exercise 7 · Complete the Conversation (8 points)

Choose the correct word from the brackets to complete each gap.

Tom: You look tired! What (were / did / was) you (doing / did / done) last night?

Sara: I (was sitting / sat / sit) at my desk until midnight. I (was writing / wrote / write) a report for work.

Tom: Oh no! (Did / Was / Were) anything interesting (happen / happened / happening) while you were working?

Sara: Actually, yes! While I (was looking / looked / look) at the window, I (saw / was seeing / see) a fox in the garden.

Tom: Really? What (was / did / were) it (doing / did / done)?

Sara: It (was running / ran / run) around the garden for a while, then it (jumped / was jumping / jump) over the fence and disappeared!

TEACHER ANSWER KEY — DO NOT DISTRIBUTE TO STUDENTS

Simple Past vs Past Continuous · A2 Lesson 1

This answer key is for teacher use only.

Exercise 1 · Which Tense? — Answers

1. She was reading a book when I arrived. → **Past Continuous**
2. He ran to catch the bus this morning. → **Simple Past**
3. They were sitting in the garden all afternoon. → **Past Continuous**
4. It started to rain during our walk. → **Simple Past**
5. I was listening to music when she called. → **Past Continuous**
6. He sat down and opened his laptop. → **Simple Past**
7. She was cooking dinner at seven o'clock. → **Past Continuous**
8. We drove to the coast last Saturday. → **Simple Past**

Exercise 2 · Multiple Choice — Answers

1. **was cooking**
2. **was listening**
3. **drove**
4. **were running**
5. **Were / working**
6. **sat**
7. **was raining**
8. **was reading**

Exercise 3 · Matching — Answers

1. She was cooking dinner when he arrived. → **a**
2. I ran to the station but missed the train. → **b**
3. They were sitting by the fire all evening. → **c**
4. While she was reading, the lights went out. → **d**
5. He drove to the airport and caught his flight. → **e**
6. It was raining when we left the house. → **f**
7. She sat down and opened her notebook. → **g**
8. I was working at my desk when I heard the noise. → **h**

Exercise 4 · Gap Fill — Answers

1. She **was reading** a magazine when the phone rang.
2. He **ran** into the room and stopped suddenly.
3. I **was listening** to the radio when you knocked on the door.
4. While they **were sitting** outside, the storm started.
5. She **was cooking** lunch at one o'clock.
6. He **drove** past the school and turned left.
7. It **was raining** heavily while we walked home.
8. They **were working** in the office when the fire alarm went off.

Exercise 5 · Word Order — Answers

1. She was reading when I arrived.
2. He ran to the station and missed the train.
3. It was raining when we left the house.
4. While she was cooking the phone rang.
5. I was listening to music when you called.
6. He sat down and opened his laptop.
7. They were sitting outside when it started to rain.
8. She drove home while I was still working.

Exercise 6 · Word Sort — Answers

Action in progress	Completed action
She ___ a book when I knocked on the door.	He ___ up the stairs and shut the door.
They ___ in the garden all afternoon.	It ___ suddenly and everyone got wet.
I ___ to the radio while I made breakfast.	She ___ down and picked up the letter.
He ___ on the motorway when his tyre went flat.	We ___ hard all day and finished the project.

Exercise 7 · Conversation — Answers

Tom: You look tired! What **were** you **doing** last night?

Sara: I **was sitting** at my desk until midnight. I **was writing** a report for work.

Tom: Oh no! **Did** anything interesting **happen** while you were working?

Sara: Actually, yes! While I **was looking** at the window, I **saw** a fox in the garden.

Tom: Really? What **was** it **doing**?

Sara: It **was running** around the garden for a while, then it **jumped** over the fence and disappeared!