

Simple Past vs Past Continuous

B1 Intermediate · Lesson 1 · Student Worksheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

Score: _____ / 56

Exercise 1 · Which Tense? (8 points)

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

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. The delegates were negotiating when the power cut occurred. | Simple Past / Past Continuous |
| 2. She observed the procedure carefully and noted several anomalies. | Simple Past / Past Continuous |
| 3. While he was arguing his case, the judge intervened. | Simple Past / Past Continuous |
| 4. The director supervised the final rehearsal personally. | Simple Past / Past Continuous |
| 5. They were struggling to meet the deadline when help finally arrived. | Simple Past / Past Continuous |
| 6. She performed the piece without a single mistake. | Simple Past / Past Continuous |
| 7. He was concentrating so deeply that he didn't hear his name called. | Simple Past / Past Continuous |
| 8. Nobody predicted the outcome of the vote accurately. | Simple Past / Past Continuous |

Exercise 2 · Multiple Choice (8 points)

Circle the correct verb form.

- The two sides ____ a compromise when the talks collapsed.
were negotiating / negotiated / was negotiating
- She ____ the entire experiment from start to finish.
observed / was observing / were observing
- While they ____ over the contract terms, the deadline passed.
argued / were arguing / was arguing
- He ____ the installation when a fault was detected.
was supervising / supervised / were supervising
- The athletes ____ visibly as the race entered its final stages.
struggled / were struggling / was struggling
- She ____ the leading role at last night's performance.
performed / was performing / were performing

7. I ____ on the report when my colleague interrupted me.

concentrated / was concentrating / were concentrating

8. Analysts ____ a downturn, but not on this scale.

were predicting / predicted / was predicting

Exercise 3 · Matching (8 points)

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

1. The delegates were negotiating when the power cut occurred. [____]

2. She observed the process and submitted her findings. [____]

3. While he was arguing, she was trying to mediate. [____]

4. The manager supervised the launch and then left. [____]

5. They were struggling to cope when the support finally arrived. [____]

6. She performed brilliantly throughout the entire evening. [____]

7. He was concentrating when the alarm sounded. [____]

8. Nobody predicted such a rapid change in the situation. [____]

h. A completed failure to foresee something that then happened.

d. A completed supervisory action followed by a departure.

b. A sequence of two completed professional actions.

c. Two separate ongoing actions happening at the same time.

f. A completed activity that lasted for the whole duration of an event.

a. Talks in progress were interrupted by a sudden technical failure.

g. A focused ongoing activity was suddenly interrupted.

e. An ongoing difficulty was still happening when help came.

Exercise 4 · Gap Fill (8 points)

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

1. The two sides _____ the final terms when the session was suspended.
(*negotiate*)

2. She _____ the patient for several hours and recorded her findings.
(*observe*)

3. While they _____ about the budget, no real decisions were being made.
(*argue*)

4. He _____ every stage of the construction process himself. (*supervise*)

5. The team _____ to process the volume of data when new software arrived.
(*struggle*)

6. She _____ the concerto from memory in front of a sell-out crowd. (*perform*)

7. I _____ so hard that I completely lost track of the time. (*concentrate*)
8. Few experts _____ the speed at which the situation would deteriorate. (*predict*)

Exercise 5 · Word Order (8 points)

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

1. The / delegates / were / negotiating / when / the / power / cut / occurred

2. She / observed / the / procedure / and / noted / several / anomalies

3. While / he / was / arguing / his / case / the / judge / intervened

4. The / director / supervised / the / final / rehearsal / personally

5. They / were / struggling / to / meet / the / deadline / when / help / arrived

6. She / performed / the / piece / without / a / single / mistake

7. He / was / concentrating / so / deeply / that / he / missed / his / name

8. Nobody / predicted / the / outcome / of / the / vote / accurately

Exercise 6 · Word Sort (8 points)

Write each sentence in the correct column.

The committee ____ over the proposed amendments all morning. • They ____ with the technical requirements throughout the project. • Nobody ____ how dramatically the market would shift. • While the cast ____, the director made last-minute changes. • She ____ the role every night for six consecutive weeks. • She ____ the results and compiled a detailed summary. • He ____ the junior staff while the senior team was away. • I ____ on my analysis when the fire alarm interrupted me.

Action in progress	Completed action

Exercise 7 · Complete the Conversation (8 points)

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

Dr Patel: I heard the conference session (was proceeding / was performing / proceeded) when the fire alarm (sounded / was sounding / sound).

Dr Chan: Yes. The panel (were observing / observed / was observing) a particularly complex case when it (happened / was happening / happen).

Dr Patel: (Did / Was / Were) anyone (predict / predicted / predicting) that there might be a problem with the system?

Dr Chan: Not really. The technician (was supervising / supervised / supervise) the equipment when he (detected / was detecting / detect) a fault, but it (was / were / did) too late to stop it.

Dr Patel: Meanwhile, the speakers (were struggling / struggled / struggle) to continue while everyone (was arguing / argued / argue) about what to do.

TEACHER ANSWER KEY — DO NOT DISTRIBUTE TO STUDENTS

Simple Past vs Past Continuous · B1 Lesson 1

This answer key is for teacher use only.

Exercise 1 · Which Tense? — Answers

1. The delegates were negotiating when the power cut occurred. → **PC**
2. She observed the procedure carefully and noted several anomalies. → **SP**
3. While he was arguing his case, the judge intervened. → **PC**
4. The director supervised the final rehearsal personally. → **SP**
5. They were struggling to meet the deadline when help finally arrived. → **PC**
6. She performed the piece without a single mistake. → **SP**
7. He was concentrating so deeply that he didn't hear his name called. → **PC**
8. Nobody predicted the outcome of the vote accurately. → **SP**

Exercise 2 · Multiple Choice — Answers

1. **were negotiating**
2. **observed**
3. **were arguing**
4. **was supervising**
5. **were struggling**
6. **performed**
7. **was concentrating**
8. **predicted**

Exercise 3 · Matching — Answers

1. The delegates were negotiating when the power cut occurred. → **a**
2. She observed the process and submitted her findings. → **b**
3. While he was arguing, she was trying to mediate. → **c**
4. The manager supervised the launch and then left. → **d**
5. They were struggling to cope when the support finally arrived. → **e**
6. She performed brilliantly throughout the entire evening. → **f**
7. He was concentrating when the alarm sounded. → **g**
8. Nobody predicted such a rapid change in the situation. → **h**

Exercise 4 · Gap Fill — Answers

1. The two sides **were negotiating** the final terms when the session was suspended.
2. She **observed** the patient for several hours and recorded her findings.
3. While they **were arguing** about the budget, no real decisions were being made.
4. He **supervised** every stage of the construction process himself.
5. The team **was struggling** to process the volume of data when new software arrived.
6. She **performed** the concerto from memory in front of a sell-out crowd.
7. I **was concentrating** so hard that I completely lost track of the time.
8. Few experts **predicted** the speed at which the situation would deteriorate.

Exercise 5 · Word Order — Answers

1. **The delegates were negotiating when the power cut occurred .**
2. **She observed the procedure and noted several anomalies .**
3. **While he was arguing his case the judge intervened .**
4. **The director supervised the final rehearsal personally .**
5. **They were struggling to meet the deadline when help arrived .**
6. **She performed the piece without a single mistake .**
7. **He was concentrating so deeply that he missed his name .**
8. **Nobody predicted the outcome of the vote accurately .**

Exercise 6 · Word Sort — Answers

Action in progress	Completed action
The committee ____ over the proposed amendments all morning.	She ____ the results and compiled a detailed summary.
While the cast ____, the director made last-minute changes.	He ____ the junior staff while the senior team was away.
They ____ with the technical requirements throughout the project.	She ____ the role every night for six consecutive weeks.
I ____ on my analysis when the fire alarm interrupted me.	Nobody ____ how dramatically the market would shift.

Exercise 7 · Conversation — Answers

Dr Patel: I heard the conference session **was proceeding** when the fire alarm **sounded**.

Dr Chan: Yes. The panel **were observing** a particularly complex case when it **happened**.

Dr Patel: **Did** anyone **predict** that there might be a problem with the system?

Dr Chan: Not really. The technician **was supervising** the equipment when he **detected** a fault, but it **was** too late to stop it.

Dr Patel: Meanwhile, the speakers **were struggling** to continue while everyone **was arguing** about what to do.

