

Activity Type

Grammar Exercises: matching, identifying, gap-fill, error correction, writing sentences from prompts

Focus

Past continuous

Aim

To distinguish the past continuous from the past simple and practice forming past continuous sentences.

Preparation

Make one copy of the two-page worksheet for each student.

Level

Pre-intermediate (A2)

Time

30 minutes

Introduction

This past continuous worksheet can be used to help students distinguish the past continuous from the past simple and practice forming past continuous sentences.

Procedure

Give each student a copy of the two-page worksheet.

First, students match sentence halves together to complete a story about a very bad day.

Exercise A - Answer key

1. i 2. e 3. a 4. c 5. g 6. h 7. f 8. j 9. d 10. b

Next, students underline the verbs in the sentences and label each verb form as past simple (PS) or past continuous (PC).

Exercise B - Answer key

Past Simple

1. didn't have
2. fell
3. ran
4. was
5. dropped
6. stole
7. left
8. lost
9. started
10. N/A

Past Continuous

- was raining
- was riding
- wasn't being
- was going
- was giving
- was working
- was running
- was walking
- was making
- was playing

After that, students complete sentences by writing verbs in brackets in the past simple or past continuous.

Exercise C - Answer key

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. was dancing / stopped | 7. was working / visited |
| 2. was drinking / came | 8. was / was flying |
| 3. met / was buying | 9. gave / was feeling |
| 4. was having / arrived | 10. landed / was taking |
| 5. was writing / called | 11. was working / saw |
| 6. heard / was listening | 12. started / was opening |

(continued on the next page)

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Procedure continued

Students then move on to correct underlined errors in a story.

Exercise D - Answer key

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1. was feeling | 10. went |
| 2. took | 11. was wearing |
| 3. was staying | 12. got |
| 4. didn't have | 13. opened |
| 5. got | 14. was sleeping |
| 6. didn't lock | 15. was trying |
| 7. went | 16. tried |
| 8. tried | 17. wasn't |
| 9. was locked | 18. was |

Finally, students use the past continuous to write excuses using information in brackets.

Exercise E - Answer key

1. I didn't send the letter because I was looking for a stamp.
2. I didn't sleep last night because I was watching TV.
3. I didn't clean my room because I was walking the dog.
4. I didn't come to the game because I was working late last night.
5. I didn't make dinner because I was buying bread and milk.
6. I didn't do my English homework because I was studying for a history test.

A. Match the sentence halves together to complete a story about a very bad day.

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. It was raining, and | a. I ran into a wall. |
| 2. I was running in the park | b. until 2 a.m. |
| 3. I wasn't being careful, so | c. it was closed. |
| 4. I was going to the store, but | d. I was making dinner. |
| 5. I dropped my notes while | e. when I fell down. |
| 6. Someone stole my bicycle | f. it left without me. |
| 7. I was running for the bus, but | g. I was giving a talk. |
| 8. I lost my phone while | h. while I was working. |
| 9. A fire started in my kitchen when | i. I didn't have an umbrella. |
| 10. My neighbour was playing the guitar | j. I was walking home. |

B. Underline the verbs in the sentences above and label each verb form as past simple (PS) or past continuous (PC).

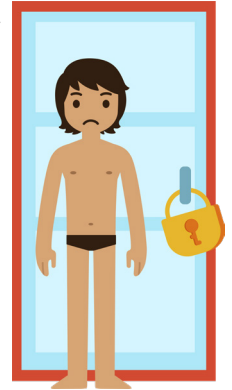
Example: It ^{PC} was raining, and I ^{PS} didn't have an umbrella.

C. Complete the sentences by writing the verbs in brackets in the past simple or past continuous.

- I (dance) when the music (stop).
- I (drink) coffee when the train (come).
- I first (meet) my wife when I (buy) shoes.
- I (have) lunch when my friend (arrive).
- I (write) an email to you when you (call).
- I (hear) the news while I (listen) to the radio.
- I (work) in the back garden when you (visit).
- There (be) big storm when I (fly) to London.
- My friend (give) me a gift when I (feel) sad.
- A bird (land) on her head while I (take) her picture.
- He (work) at the post office the last time I (see) him.
- It (start) to snow as I (open) Christmas presents.

D. Correct the underlined errors in this story.

My friend ^{told} was telling me a funny story. He (1) is feeling like he needed a break, so he (2) was taking a weekend trip. He (3) is staying in a cheap hotel and his room (4) wasn't having a bathroom. He had to share one bathroom with two other rooms. During the night, he (5) was getting up to use the bathroom. He (6) wasn't locking the door of his room or take his key. When he (7) was going back to his room, he (8) was trying to open the door, but it (9) was locking. So, he (10) was going downstairs to the front desk and asked for the key, although he (11) is wearing only his underwear. The staff (12) was getting the key and (13) was opening the room, but someone (14) is sleeping inside! My friend (15) is trying to get into the wrong room! He then (16) was trying the next room. It (17) isn't being locked and his bags were there. He (18) was being so embarrassed!



E. Use the past continuous to write excuses using the information in brackets.

Example: Why didn't you answer the phone? (take a shower)

I didn't answer the phone because I was taking a shower.
.....

1. Why didn't you send the letter? (look for a stamp)

.....

2. Why didn't you sleep last night? (watch TV)

.....

3. Why didn't you clean your room? (walk the dog)

.....

4. Why didn't you come to the game? (work late last night)

.....

5. Why didn't you make dinner? (buy bread and milk)

.....

6. Why didn't you do your English homework? (study for a history test)

.....