

# Past Progressive

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# Quick and Handy Grammar Review

## THE PAST PROGRESSIVE

### A. Function 1

The main function of the past progressive (also called *the past continuous*) is to show a continuing (long) action getting interrupted by a short past action.

<b>Tense</b>	<b>Past Progressive (Main Use)</b>
<b>Diagram</b>	
<b>Examples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I <b>was eating</b> dinner when he <b>called</b> me last night.</li> <li>• When he <b>called</b> me last night, I <b>was eating</b> dinner.</li> </ul>
<b>Form</b>	was / were + -ing verb
<b>Function</b>	Two actions occurred in the past. The first (long) action is interrupted by the second (short) action.
<b>Time Markers</b>	when, while

## NOTES

- When forming the past progressive in English, the independent clause uses **was / were + -ing verb** and the dependent clause takes **the simple past**. Remember that the dependent clause can come before or after the independent clause. When a sentence begins with a dependent clause, use a comma.
  - **We were playing soccer** when the storm hit.
  - When the storm hit, **we were playing soccer**.
- Some verbs are common as short actions, and knowing them will help you identify if a sentence needs the past progressive. These verbs include *called, rang, arrived, came, landed, hit, and went out*.
  - They were studying when the bell **rang**.
  - She was driving when she **hit** a tree.

## Quick and Handy Grammar Review cont.

### B. Function 2

A secondary function of the past progressive is to emphasize that two long, continuing actions happened at the same time.

<b>Tense</b>	<b>Past Progressive (Secondary Use)</b>
<b>Diagram</b>	
<b>Examples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I <b>was daydreaming</b> while you <b>were talking</b>.</li> <li>• You <b>were talking</b> while I <b>was daydreaming</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Form</b>	was / were + -ing verb
<b>Function</b>	Two long actions occurred at the same time in the past.
<b>Time Markers</b>	when, while

### NOTE

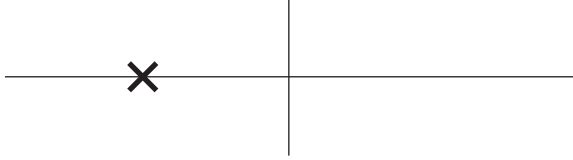
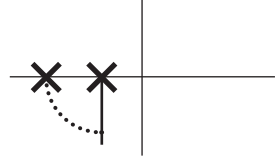
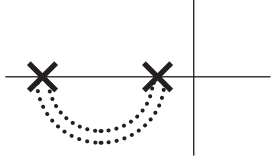
It is also possible to use the past progressive to emphasize only one long past action.

- We **were studying** all night.
- The children **were crying** loudly.
- I **was sitting** on the edge of my seat during the movie.
- He **was still playing** the guitar at 11:00 pm.
- At 8:00 pm my brothers **were doing** their homework.

## Quick and Handy Grammar Review cont.

### C. The Simple Past Vs. The Past Progressive

The simple past is used to show a finished past action.  
Compare the two tenses using the diagram below.

Tense	Simple Past	Past Progressive	
Diagram			
Form	<b>REGULAR VERBS:</b> verb + -ed <b>IRREGULAR VERBS:</b> various changes	was / were + -ing verb	
Function	A defined past action (you know when the action occurred)	A long past action interrupted by a short past action	Two long past actions occurring at the same time
Time Markers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• yesterday</li> <li>• the day before yesterday</li> <li>• last</li> <li>• ago</li> <li>• when</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• when</li> <li>• while</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• when</li> <li>• while</li> </ul>
Example	I <b>studied</b> for the test last night.	She <b>was brushing</b> her teeth when the power <b>went out</b> .	They <b>were listening</b> to music when they <b>were driving</b> .

# Exercise 1

## THE ANDERSONS' VERY FULL DAY

The Andersons had a very busy day yesterday. Look at the schedule below and then complete the sentences in Part B.

### A. Schedule

Time	Mr. Anderson	Mrs. Anderson
7:00 – 7:15	showered	got ready for work
7:15 – 7:20	made breakfast for kids	
8:00 – 8:30	ate breakfast	ate breakfast at work
9:00 – 12:00	wrote emails	taught history class
12:00 – 1:00	ate lunch in a restaurant	ate lunch at work
1:00 – 2:00	met with boss	taught math class
2:00 – 3:00	met with sales manager	met with principal
3:00 – 4:00	wrote reports	exercised at gym
4:00 – 5:00	picked up kids	bought groceries
5:30 – 6:00	took kids to tennis	made dinner
6:30 – 7:00	ate dinner	ate dinner
7:00 – 9:00	cleaned apartment	cleaned apartment
9:00 – 11:00	watched a movie	watched a movie
11:00	fell asleep	fell asleep

## Exercise 1 cont.

### B. Sentences

1. At 7:10 Mr. Anderson *was taking a shower* \_\_\_\_\_.
2. At 7:15 Mrs. Anderson \_\_\_\_\_.
3. At 8:15 Mr. and Mrs. Anderson \_\_\_\_\_.
4. At 10:00 Mr. Anderson \_\_\_\_\_.
5. At 11:00 Mrs. Anderson \_\_\_\_\_.
6. At 12:30 Mr. Anderson \_\_\_\_\_  
and Mrs. Anderson \_\_\_\_\_.
7. At 1:30 Mrs. Anderson \_\_\_\_\_.
8. At 3:30 Mrs. Anderson \_\_\_\_\_.
9. At 4:30 Mr. Anderson \_\_\_\_\_  
and Mrs. Anderson \_\_\_\_\_.
10. At 8:00 Mr. and Mrs. Anderson \_\_\_\_\_.
11. At 12:30 am Mr. and Mrs. Anderson \_\_\_\_\_.

## Exercise 2

### CLASS SURVEY

Interview the classmates in your group. Find out what they were doing at the specific times mentioned and complete the chart below.

Time	Classmate #1	Classmate #2	Classmate #3	You
4:00 pm yesterday				
5:00 pm yesterday				
6:00 yesterday evening				
8:00 last night				
1:00 this morning				
6:00 this morning				
7:45 this morning				
8:15 this morning				
8:45 this morning				

## Exercise 3

### THE PAST PROGRESSIVE AND THE SIMPLE PAST

Make sentences using past progressive and simple past to describe the situation below. Follow the example given.

- Yesterday, the students at Kelvin High School were all busy doing things when the fire alarm rang.

1. 12th grade boys / play basketball / in the gym

*The 12th grade boys were playing basketball in the gym when the fire alarm rang.*

---

2. school choir / practise for the concert
- 

3. the 10th grade class / study Spanish
- 

4. principal / meet / with group of parents
- 

5. history teachers / discuss / final exam
- 

6. custodian / clean / girls' locker room
- 

7. the student council / discuss / graduation dance
- 

8. actors / rehearse / school play
-





## Exercise 5

### PAST PROGRESSIVE VS. SIMPLE PAST

Read each situation below and answer the following questions.  
Use your imagination to answer the questions in the simple past.

#### A. Dan

Dan was walking to work when it started to rain.

1. What was Dan doing when it started to rain?

*He was walking to work.*

---

2. What did Dan do when it started to rain?

*He opened his umbrella and ran to the bus stop.*

---

#### B. Maryann

Maryann was writing a letter to her boyfriend when the lights went out.

1. What was Maryann doing when the lights went out?

---

2. What did Maryann do when the lights went out?

---

#### C. Brenda

Brenda was cooking dinner when she saw a mouse on the kitchen floor.

1. What was Brenda doing when she saw the mouse?

---

2. What did Brenda do when she saw the mouse?

---

## Exercise 5 cont.

### D. Andrea

Last week Andrea was having coffee with her boyfriend when her boss walked into the café.

1. What was Andrea doing when her boss walked into the café?

---

2. What did Andrea do when her boss came into the café?

---

### E. Kevin

Kevin was painting the house when he fell off the ladder.

1. What was Kevin doing when he fell off the ladder?

---

2. What did Kevin do when he fell off the ladder?

---

### F. You

I was walking to work when I saw the car accident.

1. What were you doing when you saw the accident?

---

2. What did you do when you saw the accident?

---

## Exercise 6

### PAST PROGRESSIVE VS. SIMPLE PAST

Complete the following sentences using the correct form (past progressive or simple past) of the verbs provided in brackets.

1. He \_\_\_\_\_ (fall) off the ladder while he \_\_\_\_\_ (paint) the ceiling.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_ (study) when I \_\_\_\_\_ (call) you last night?
3. They \_\_\_\_\_ (drive) very fast when the police officer \_\_\_\_\_ (stop) them.
4. While I \_\_\_\_\_ (drive) to work yesterday, I \_\_\_\_\_ (see) an accident.
5. I \_\_\_\_\_ (read) a great book last week.
6. My friends \_\_\_\_\_ (drop in) for a visit while I \_\_\_\_\_ (watch) TV last night.
7. I \_\_\_\_\_ (see) Andrea at the party last night.  
She \_\_\_\_\_ (wear) a beautiful dress.
8. The children \_\_\_\_\_ (go) to bed at 9:00 last night. At 10:00, they \_\_\_\_\_ (sleep).
9. We \_\_\_\_\_ (have) dinner at a new restaurant last night. While we \_\_\_\_\_ (eat), one of the waiters \_\_\_\_\_ (drop) a tray on the floor.

## Exercise 6 cont.

10. Monty \_\_\_\_\_ in his garage last night when he  
       \_\_\_\_\_ a loud noise. He \_\_\_\_\_  
       \_\_\_\_\_ down his tools and \_\_\_\_\_ outside into the yard.  
       \_\_\_\_\_ While he \_\_\_\_\_ around, someone \_\_\_\_\_  
       \_\_\_\_\_ out of his front door. Monty \_\_\_\_\_ the police.  
       \_\_\_\_\_ He \_\_\_\_\_ the police that the robber  
       \_\_\_\_\_ a black ski jacket and jeans.  
       \_\_\_\_\_
11. When Sue \_\_\_\_\_ at the theatre,  
       \_\_\_\_\_ her friends \_\_\_\_\_ for her inside.
12. John \_\_\_\_\_ his leg while he \_\_\_\_\_ football.
13. Mr. Duncan \_\_\_\_\_ home last night while his wife  
       \_\_\_\_\_ dinner and the children \_\_\_\_\_ TV.
14. Paula \_\_\_\_\_ home yesterday because it \_\_\_\_\_ very heavily.

## Exercise 7

Write questions in the chart and interview your classmates.  
If a classmate answers “yes” to a question, write his or her name in the chart. Walk around the class and find someone...

#	Find someone...	Question	Classmate's Name
1	who was sleeping at 10:00 last night.		
2	who wasn't sleeping when his or her alarm clock rang this morning.		
3	who was sitting in the classroom when the teacher came in this morning.		
4	who was eating dinner last night when someone phoned.		
5	who was wearing earrings yesterday.		
6	who was chewing gum before class.		
7	who was doing homework at 9:30 last night.		
8	who was taking a bath at 10:00 last night.		
9	who was playing a sport at 8:00 last night.		
10	who was standing in the hall when the class began this morning.		