

Past continuous

GRAMMAR

LEVEL
Intermediate

NUMBER
EN_BE_2533G

LANGUAGE
English

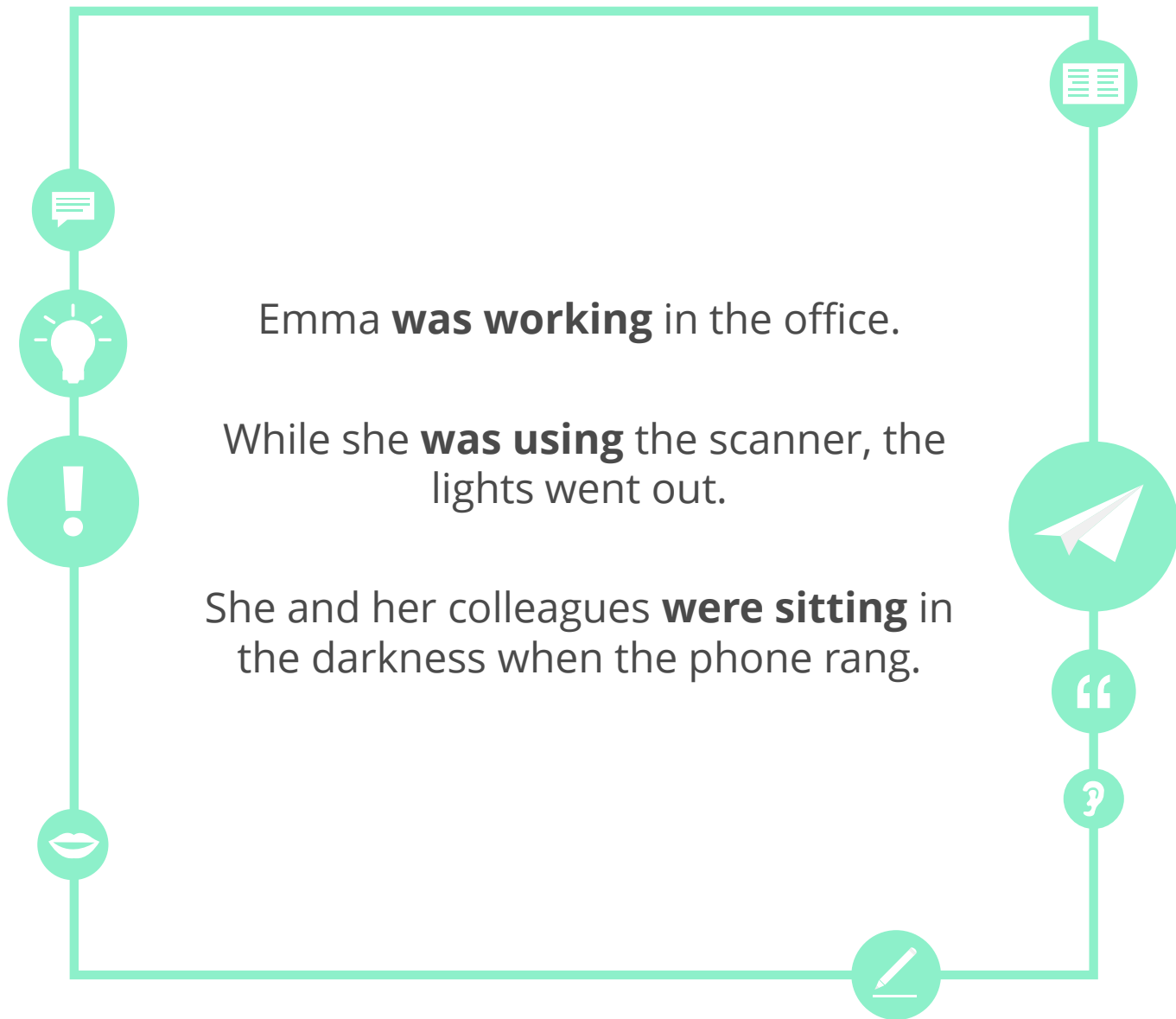




Goals

- Can correctly form the past continuous.
- Can determine when to use the past continuous compared to past simple.

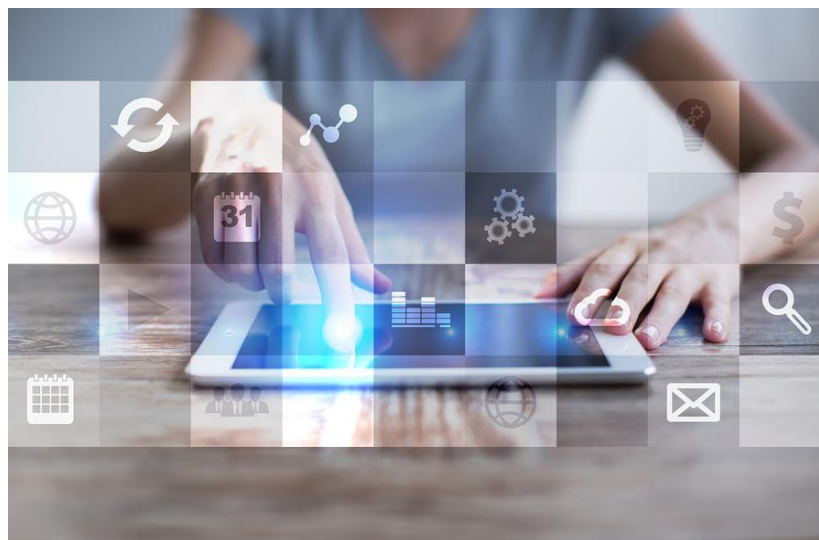






Preview and warm-up

In this lesson, you are going to learn about the **past continuous**.



While we **were talking**, I received an email.



Past continuous

- We form the **past continuous** with **was/were + -ing** form of the verb.
- Look at the examples below:

subject	was/were	-ing form	
I	was	eating	pasta.
You	were	drinking	coffee.
She	was	working	there in 2013.
We	were	sitting	in a meeting.
They	were	talking	on the phone.



Was and were



- Remember ***was*** and ***were*** are the **past simple** forms of the verb ***to be***

I was

You were

He was

She was

We were

They were



He **was** at a café yesterday.



Past continuous in the negative

- We form negative sentences by simply **adding *not*** to ***was/were***.
- We often use the contracted forms: ***wasn't*** and ***weren't***.

Affirmative	→	Negative
I was eating pizza.	→	I wasn't eating pizza.
You were drinking a coffee.	→	You weren't drinking a coffee.
She was working there in 2013.	→	She wasn't working there in 2013.
We were sitting in a meeting.	→	We weren't sitting in a meeting.
They were talking on the phone.	→	They weren't talking on the phone.



Past continuous in questions

- We invert the **subject** and **was/were** to form a question.
- You can answer simply using the **auxiliary verb**.
- You can also add a **question word** to the **beginning of the sentence**.

Question	Answer
Was I eating pizza?	Yes, you were . No, you weren't .
Were you drinking a coffee?	Yes, I was . No, I wasn't .
When was she working there?	She was working there in 2013.
Where were we sitting ?	We were sitting in a meeting.



Past continuous examples

- Look at the examples with **past continuous** below:



They **were recycling** old computers.



You **weren't listening** to me!



Was he **working** with you?



Complete the sentences

Complete the sentences with *was* or *were*.

1. Ellen _____ turning off the lights.

2. We _____ recycling old electronics.

3. I _____ unplugging my laptop and my desk lamp.

4. They _____ promoting remote work.

5. You _____ avoiding single-use plastics.



Transform the sentences

Make the previous sentences in past continuous negative.

1. Ellen was turning off the lights.
2. We were recycling old electronics.
3. I was unplugging my laptop and my desk lamp.
4. They were promoting remote work.
5. You were avoiding single-use plastics.



Transform into questions

1. Tom and Joe were buying reusable cutlery.



Were Tom and Joe buying reusable cutlery?

2. Anne was clearing out the fridge.



3. Kate was enabling power saving mode on her tablet.



4. My town was offering free bikes for locals.



5. We were going paperless in the office.



6. I was reading about green teams at a workplace.



7. He was writing an article about single-use plastics.



8. They were learning about zero-waste lifestyle.





Answer the questions

1. Were Tom and Joe buying reusable cutlery?

➔ (+) Yes, they were.

2. Was Anna clearing out the fridge?

➔ (-) No, she wasn't.

3. Was Kate enabling power saving mode on her tablet?

➔ (+)

4. Was my town offering free bikes for locals?

➔ (-)

5. Were we going paperless in the office?

➔ (-)

6. Was I reading about green teams at a workplace?

➔ (+)

7. Was he writing an article about single-use plastics?

➔ (+)

8. Were they learning about zero-waste lifestyle?

➔ (-)



Past continuous

- We use the past continuous to describe an action **in progress at a certain time in the past.**
- He started the article. → **He was writing the article.** → He finished the article.
13:00 13:30 – 14:30 14:30

Examples

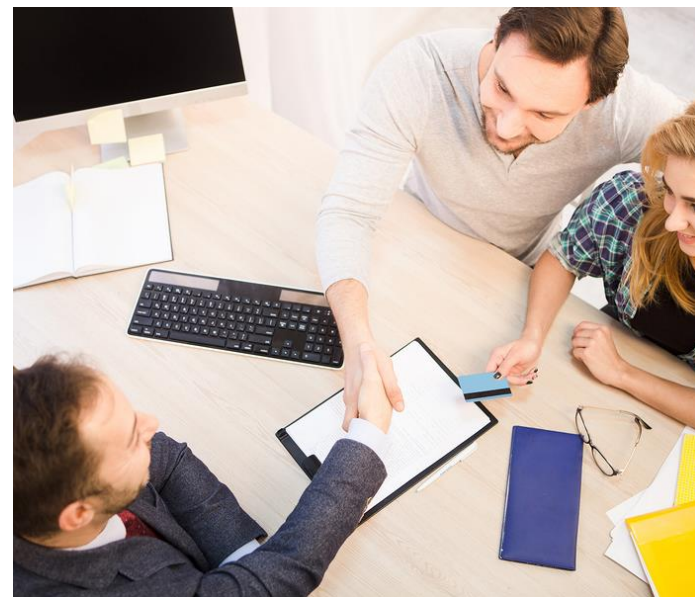
It was raining all afternoon.

What were you doing at 8 o'clock in the morning?

Where were you going at 5 o'clock?

Who were you talking to in the evening?

I wasn't riding my bike on my way to work.





Dictation

Write down what your teacher is saying.



Listen!



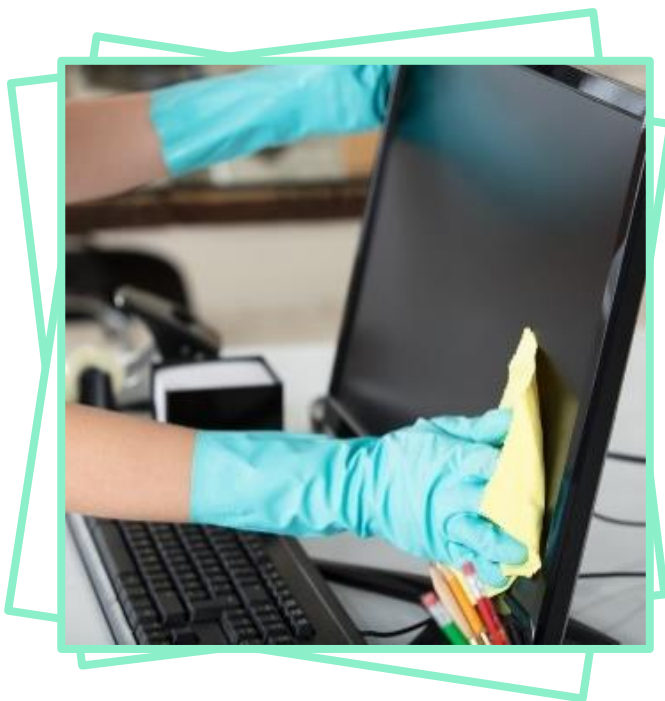
a
c b





What was happening here?

Describe what was happening in the picture. Make minimum four sentences using past continuous.





Past continuous and past simple

- We often use the **past continuous** and the **past simple together**.
 - The **past continuous** gives the **background** situation and the **past simple** explains an **individual action**.

What **were you doing** when **the phone rang**?

I **was answering** an email when **the phone rang**.





While and when

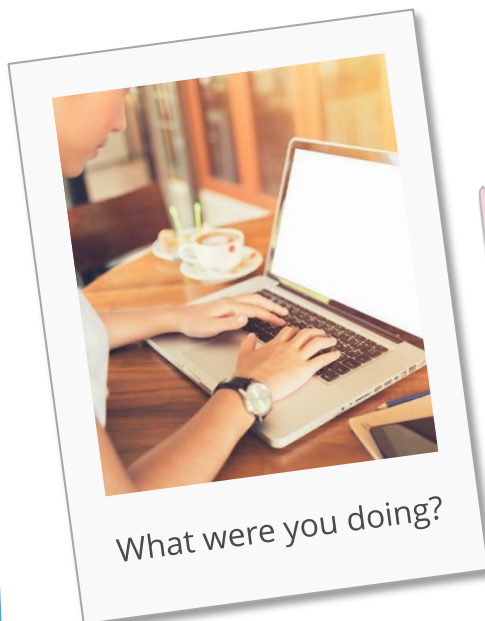
- We often use **while** and **when** with the past continuous and the past simple in the same sentence.
 - Use **while** before the **past continuous**.
 - Use **when** before the **past simple**.

It was raining	when we left the office.
I was unplugging my laptop	when you arrived.
While I was buying plastic-free products,	I met my boss.
While we were sitting in the meeting,	he turned off the lights.



Unscramble the sentences

Unscramble the following sentences.



1.talking to
each

Were you

she called
you?

other when

2.free bikes.

reports, we
got

While Sue was

working on
the

3.We were

laptop broke
down.

recycling old

electronics
when my

4. the expert

While we

took notes.

were
presenting



Make one sentence out of two

1. Hear my colleague leaving the room. / Sit in the office.



I was sitting in the office when I heard my colleague leaving the room.

2. Live in the Netherlands. / Learn about environmentally friendly solutions.



3. Look for power saving mode. / My phone switch off.



4. Find my reusable cutlery. / Tidy my desk.



5. Promote remote work. / Meet her husband.





Text

Read the first paragraph of a text. Transform the underlined verbs to have past continuous sentences.

Mark sat in the office, when the CEO, George arrived. He answered his emails when George wanted to talk to him. While George travelled for business last week, he got a new opportunity.





Answer the questions

Read the text again and answer the questions.



Who arrived when Mark was sitting in the office?

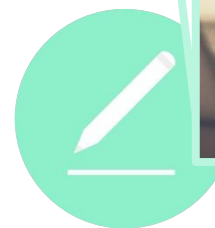
Who was answering his emails?

When was George travelling for business?



Finish the story

Why did George want to talk to Mark? Think about an ending for the story. Write 3-4 sentences and use the past continuous when possible.





Speaking

Share your story ending with your teacher or classmates.





Reflect on the goals

Go back to the second slide of the lesson and check if you have achieved all the goals of the lesson.

yes

no





Reflect on this lesson

Think about everything you have seen in this lesson.
What were the most difficult activities or words? The easiest?



If you have time, go over
the most difficult slides again



Answer key

Exercise 1, p.10

1. was
2. were
3. was
4. were
5. were

Exercise 2, p.11

1. Ellen wasn't turning off the lights.
2. We weren't recycling old electronics.
3. I wasn't unplugging my laptop and my desk lamp.
4. They weren't promoting remote work.
5. You weren't avoiding single-use plastics.

Exercise 3, p.12

2. Was Anne clearing out the fridge?
3. Was Kate enabling power saving mode on her tablet?
4. Was my town offering free bikes for locals?
5. Were we going paperless in the office?
6. Was I reading about green teams at a workplace?
7. Was he writing an article about single-use plastics?
8. Were they learning about zero-waste lifestyle?



Answer key

Exercise 4, p.13

3. Yes, she was.
4. No, it wasn't.
5. No, we weren't.
6. Yes, I was.
7. Yes, he was.
8. No, they weren't.

Exercise 5, p.19

1. Were you talking to each other when she called you?
2. While Sue was working on the reports, we got free bikes.
3. We were recycling old electronics when my laptop broke down.
4. While we were presenting, the expert took notes.

Exercise 6, p.20

2. While I was living in the Netherlands, I learnt about environmentally friendly solutions. (Can be any subject)
3. I was looking for power saving mode when my phone switched off.
4. While I was tidying my desk, I found my reusable cutlery.
5. She was promoting remote work when she met her husband.



Answer key

Exercise 7, p.21

was sitting / was answering / was travelling

Exercise 8, p.22

1. the CEO, George
2. Mark
3. last week



Transcription

- Exercise p. 14**
1. We were listening to a presentation on having a green team in the morning.
 2. She was using microfibre cloths to clean her screen in the afternoon.
 3. She was wearing green gloves at 5 o'clock.
 4. My boss was promoting remote work during the meeting.





Homework fill in the gaps

1. We _____ on the sofa when we heard the news.
2. He _____ tea when I broke the cup.
3. I _____ about green commuting when my colleague offered a free ride.
4. While we _____ the lights, the taxi arrived.
5. While Hanna and Betty _____ coffee, Joe took pictures of them.
6. While I _____ the papers, they signed the contract.

print

read

make

sit

have

turn off



Homework writing activity

Imagine that you took part in a workshop for greener workplaces. Write sentences about what you were doing/talking about. List at least five things.

<input type="radio"/>	<u>We were talking about green commuting.</u>
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Homework answer key

Exercise 1, p.30

1. were sitting
2. was making
3. was reading
4. were turning off
5. were having
6. was printing



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