



I'll never forget the first time I met my wife. I was at a party with friends. While everyone was laughing and talking, a beautiful and mysterious woman arrived.

When she walked into the room, everyone immediately stopped talking and looked at her. No one knew who she was. And I remember that she was wearing an amazing red dress.

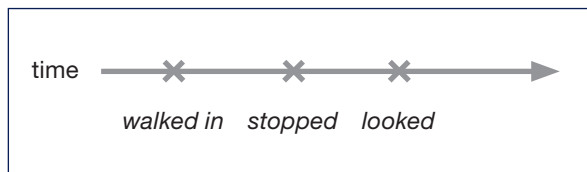
## Presentation

Use the past simple and the past continuous to talk about situations and events in the past.

### Past simple

Use the past simple for:

- A short completed action: *She **arrived** at the party.*
- A sequence of actions: *She **walked** into the room. Everyone **stopped** talking and **looked** at her.*



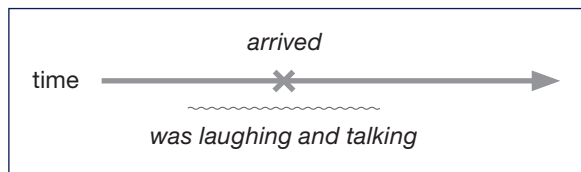
### Past continuous

Use the past continuous for:

- An unfinished or continuing activity: *Everyone **was laughing and talking**.*
- A background situation: *She **was wearing** an amazing red dress.*

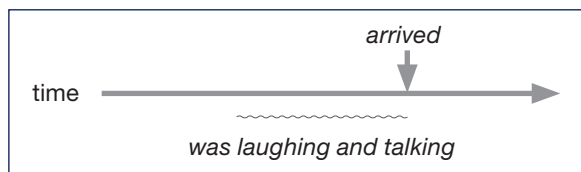
We often use the past continuous with the past simple to explain that two actions happened at the same time:

*While everyone **was laughing and talking**, a beautiful woman **arrived**.*



The past simple action may interrupt the longer past continuous action:

*While everyone **was laughing and talking**, a beautiful woman **arrived**. Everyone immediately **stopped** talking.*



### when and while

We often use *when* and *while* in sentences with the past simple and the past continuous. They can go at the beginning or in the middle of the sentence:

***When** I arrived, everyone **was laughing and talking**.*

*Everyone **was laughing and talking** **when** I arrived.*

**TIP** You can use *while* or *when* with the past continuous, but we don't normally use *while* with the past simple.

## Exercises

### 1 Choose the correct option.

- 1 He <sup>1</sup>rescuing / was rescuing his cat from a tree when the accident <sup>2</sup>happened / was happening.  
He <sup>3</sup>climbing / was climbing the tree when he <sup>4</sup>fell / was falling and <sup>5</sup>broke / was breaking his leg.
- 2 When we <sup>6</sup>arrived / were arriving at the party, some of the guests <sup>7</sup>got / were getting ready to leave.  
The host <sup>8</sup>came / was coming over to talk to us and we <sup>9</sup>apologized / were apologizing for being late.
- 3 While I <sup>10</sup>ate/ was eating dinner last night I <sup>11</sup>heard / was hearing a loud noise. I <sup>12</sup>went / was going over to the window and looked outside. It was dark, but someone <sup>13</sup>moved / was moving across the garden towards the house. Immediately, I <sup>14</sup>called / was calling the police.

### 2 Complete the questions for the answers using the past simple or the past continuous.

- 1 What ..... you ..... when your team scored? (do)  
We celebrated!
- 2 Who ..... you ..... to on the phone? (talk)  
It was my mother.
- 3 ..... it ..... when you went out earlier? (rain)  
Yes, but it stopped at midday.
- 4 Where ..... you ..... at the weekend? (go)  
To London to see some friends.
- 5 Where ..... you ..... when the car broke down? (drive)  
To the garage!
- 6 Why ..... you ..... school today? (miss)  
I didn't feel well.

### 3 Complete the dialogue using the past simple or the past continuous.

- A: <sup>1</sup> ..... Did you go ..... (go) to Hugh's party last night?
- B: No, I didn't. In fact I <sup>2</sup> ..... (leave) my house to go to it when the phone rang.  
My brother had a problem so I <sup>3</sup> ..... (spend) the evening at his house.  
Why? What <sup>4</sup> ..... (happen)?
- A: Well, at around midnight, while everyone <sup>5</sup> ..... (dance) and the band  
<sup>6</sup> ..... (play), some thieves <sup>7</sup> ..... (break) into the house.
- B: No! Really?
- A: Yes! Hugh <sup>8</sup> ..... (not find out) till a few hours later.
- B: What <sup>9</sup> ..... they ..... (take)?
- A: Some money and jewellery from the upstairs.