

The past continuous tense has these uses:

1. It is used to talk about something that was happening at some time in the past. The action had not finished at a particular time in the past.

*Three years ago I was living in Germany.  
I was talking to my friend at ten o'clock last night. (I began talking to her before ten o'clock. I was talking to her after ten o'clock.)*

2. It is used to talk about something that was happening when another past action was completed. It is used with the past simple tense.

*I was walking down the street when I saw the 'Sale' sign. We were playing when my brother ran away and caught a bus.*



*My phone rang when I was driving home.  
(Simple Past) (Past Continuous)*

3. It is used to talk about two actions in the past that happened at the same time and were continuous.

*I was talking to my friend while I was washing the dishes.  
The sun was shining while we were walking in the park.  
She was working on her computer while she was talking to her friend.*



### Past Continuous Forms - Positive

*I was eating an apple.  
You were eating an apple.  
He / she / it was eating an apple.  
We were eating apples.  
They were eating apples.*

### Past Continuous Forms - Negative

*I wasn't (was not) eating an apple..  
You weren't (were not) eating an apple.  
He / she / it wasn't (was not) eating an apple.  
We weren't (were not) eating apples.  
They weren't (were not) eating apples.*

### Past Continuous Forms - Question

*What was I eating?  
What were you eating?  
What was he / she / it eating?  
What were we eating?  
What were they eating?*

The past continuous tense is made with **was / were + the present participle**.  
(The present participle is the base of a verb + *ing* e.g. *talk --> talking*).

### Exercise 1

Write the present participle of these verbs. (*Be careful with your spelling!*) Two are done for you as examples.

rain --> **raining**

walk --> **walking**

stand

work

buy

sleep

go

eat

listen

come

choose

drive

ride

stop

run

leave

cut

put

### Exercise 2

Complete these sentences with the verb in the brackets. Put each verb in the past continuous tense.

a. I lost my keys when I \_\_\_\_\_ home. (*walk*)

b. It was raining while we \_\_\_\_\_ dinner. (*have*)

c. I saw the department stores when I \_\_\_\_\_ on the bus (*sit*)

d. Her phone rang while she \_\_\_\_\_ to her new boss. (*talk*)

e. My friends \_\_\_\_\_ to work when they heard the news on the radio. (*drive*)

f. He \_\_\_\_\_ his bicycle when the cat ran across the road. (*ride*)

g. We couldn't go to the beach yesterday because it \_\_\_\_\_. (*rain*)

h. It was a lovely day. The sun was shining and the birds \_\_\_\_\_ in the trees. (*sing*)

### Answer Key:

Exercise 1: standing, working, buying, sleeping, going, eating, listening, coming, choosing, driving, riding, stopping, running, leaving, cutting, putting.

Exercise 2: a. was walking, b. were having, c. was sitting, d. was talking, e. were driving, f. was riding, g. was raining, h. were singing

