

The **past simple** tense is used for things that happened in the past that have finished.

*We bought a secondhand car.
We drove to the shops near our house.*

The **past continuous** is used to show something that was happening when another past action was completed.

We were doing something and something else happened.

*While we were looking for parking I turned down a side road.
(During the time we were looking for parking, I turned down a side road.)
The driver didn't check his mirrors while he was reversing.
It was not going fast but it broke one of our headlights.*

**While and when are used to show that something happened during that time.*

The past continuous can also show things in the past that happened at the same time and were continuous.

My husband was shouting and I was pressing the horn.

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

Past Continuous Forms - Positive

*I was driving.
We were driving.
You were driving.
They were driving.
He/she/it was driving.*

Past Continuous Forms - Negative

*I was not (wasn't) driving.
We were not (weren't) driving.
You were not (weren't) driving.
They were not (weren't) driving.
He/she/it was not (wasn't) driving.*

Past Continuous Forms - Question

*Was I driving?
Were we driving?
Were you driving?
Were they driving?
Was he/she/it driving?*



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

Complete each gap with the verb in brackets in the past continuous tense: **was / were + the present participle**.

1. I _____ past the bank yesterday when I saw a blue car suddenly pull out into the traffic. (**drive**)
2. Other cars _____ their horns but the driver of the blue car didn't take any notice. (**honk**)
3. I stopped my car, and while I _____, two police cars drove up. (**watch**)
4. Lots of people _____ outside the bank and everyone _____ excitedly. (**stand, talk**)
5. I thought I should drive on home. While I _____ at the next traffic light, I turned on the radio and listened to the news. (**wait**)
6. The announcer said the robbers _____ a blue getaway car. (**drive**)

Exercise 2

Fill the gaps in this text with **was/were**.

1. We listening to the radio when I saw the getaway car.
2. My friend talking on her phone while she waited in the bank.
3. The security guard taking a break when the robbery happened.
4. The cameras (not) operating during the robbery.
5. While the robbery taking place, the getaway car was parked outside.
6. When the television crew arrived, the police asking everyone what they had seen.
7. What you doing yesterday afternoon at 4 o'clock?
8. We driving past the bank.

Answer Key:

Exercise 1: 1. was driving, 2. were honking, 3. was watching, 4. were standing, was talking, 5. was waiting, 6. were driving.

Exercise 2: 1. were, 2. was, 3. was, 4. weren't, 5. was, 6. were, 7. were, 8. were.

