

Past Progressive

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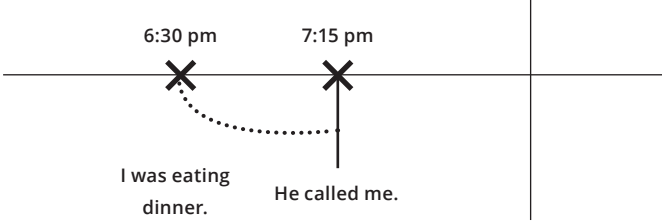
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Quick and Handy Grammar Review

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.

Tense	Past Progressive (Main Use)
Diagram	 <p>The diagram shows a horizontal timeline. A long horizontal line represents the duration of the first action, 'I was eating dinner', starting at 6:30 pm and ending at 7:15 pm. A vertical line at 7:15 pm represents the second action, 'He called me.', which interrupts the first action. A curved arrow points from the end of the first action to the start of the second action.</p>
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was eating dinner when he called me last night. • When he called me last night, I was eating dinner.
Form	was / were + -ing verb
Function	Two actions occurred in the past. The first (long) action is interrupted by the second (short) action.
Time Markers	when, while

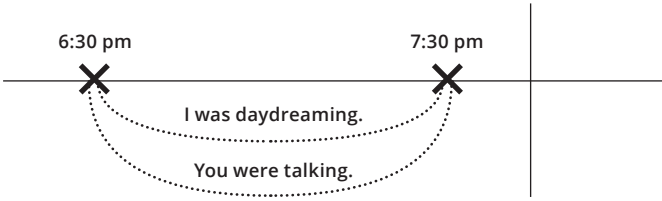
NOTES

- 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.

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

NOTE

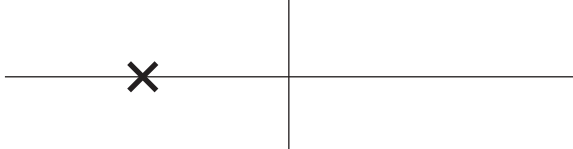
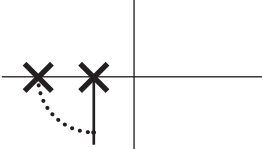
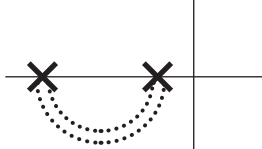
It is also possible to use the past progressive to emphasize only one long past action.

- 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	REGULAR VERBS: verb + -ed IRREGULAR VERBS: 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"> yesterday the day before yesterday last ago when 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> when while 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> when while
Example	I studied for the test last night.	She was brushing her teeth when the power went out .	They were listening to music when they were driving .

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	made breakfast for family
7:15 – 7:20	shaved	
8:00 – 8:30	ate breakfast	ate breakfast
9:00 – 12:00	wrote emails	taught history class
12:00 – 1:00	ate lunch in a restaurant	ate lunch at school
1:00 – 2:00	met with boss	taught math class
2:00 – 3:00	met with secretary	met with principal
3:00 – 4:00	wrote reports	exercised at gym
4:00 – 5:00	visited clients	bought groceries
5:30 – 6:00	played tennis	made dinner
6:30 – 7:00	ate dinner at home	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 / practice 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 4

Complete the following sentences using the correct form of the past progressive tense of the verbs provided in brackets.

1. They were standing on the corner when I saw them.
(stand)
2. The sun _____ when I woke up this morning.
(shine)
3. It _____ when I left the office.
(rain)
4. I _____ dinner when you called me.
(eat)
5. She got very sick while she _____ overseas.
(travel)
6. Martin _____ in the garden when it started to rain.
(work)
7. I _____ dinner when the phone rang.
(cook)
8. Mr. Johnson cut himself while he _____ .
(shave)
9. She fell asleep while she _____ the movie.
(watch)
10. Andrea broke her ankle when she _____ .
(skate)
11. While I _____ home, I saw a bad accident.
(drive)
12. She found a ten dollar bill while she _____ home.
(walk)
13. They _____ when the accident happened.
(speed)
14. The baby _____ when we got home from the party.
(sleep)
15. She broke a plate while she _____ the dishes.
(do)
16. When you called, I _____ a shower.
(take)
17. David met his neighbors while he _____ into his new apartment.
(move)

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. Andrew

Last week Andrew was having coffee with his beautiful new secretary when his wife came into the café.

1. What was Andrew doing when his wife came into the café?

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

Exercise 6 cont.

10. Monty _____ in his garage last night when he
(work)
_____ a loud noise. He _____
(hear) (put)
down his tools and _____ outside into the yard.
(go)
While he _____ around, someone _____
(look) (run)
out of his front door. Monty _____ the police.
(call)
He _____ the police that the robber
(tell)
_____ a black ski jacket and jeans.
(wear)
11. When Sue _____ at the theater,
(arrive)
her friends _____ for her inside.
(wait)
12. John _____ his leg while he _____ football.
(break) (play)
13. Mr. Duncan _____ home last night while his wife
(get)
_____ dinner and the children _____ TV.
(cook) (watch)
14. Paula _____ home yesterday because it _____ very heavily.
(stay) (snow)

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...

#	Activity	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.		