

I was doing (past continuous) and I did (past simple)

A



Jack was reading a book. The phone rang. He stopped reading. He answered the phone.

What **happened**? The phone **rang**. (past simple)
 What **was** Jack **doing** when the phone rang? } (past continuous)
 He **was reading** a book.
 What **did** he **do** when the phone rang? } (past simple)
 He **stopped** reading and **answered** the phone.

Jack began reading *before* the phone rang.
 So: **When** the phone rang, he **was reading**.



B

past simple

● A: What **did** you **do** yesterday morning?
 B: We **played** tennis. (from 10 to 11.30)



we played
 (complete action)

- Jack **read** a book yesterday. (= from beginning to end)
- **Did** you **watch** the film on television last night?
- It **didn't rain** while we were on holiday.

past continuous

● A: What **were** you **doing** at 10.30?
 B: We **were playing** tennis.



we were playing
 (unfinished action)

- Jack **was reading** a book when the phone rang.
- **Were** you **watching** television when I phoned you?
- It **wasn't raining** when I got up.

- I **started** work at 9 o'clock and **finished** at 4.30. At 2.30 I **was working**.
- It **was raining** when we **went** out. (= it started raining *before* we went out)
- I **saw** Lucy and Steve this morning. They **were waiting** at the bus stop.
- Jenny **fell** asleep while she **was reading**.

EXERCISES

4.1 Look at the pictures and put the verbs in the correct form, past continuous or past simple.



Carol **broke** (break) her arm last week. It (happen) when she (paint) her room. She (fall) off the ladder.



The train (arrive) at the station and Paula (get) off. Two friends of hers, John and Jenny, (wait) to meet her.



Yesterday Sue (walk) along the road when she (meet) Jim. He (go) to the station to catch a train and he (carry) a bag. They (stop) to talk for a few minutes.

4.2 Put the verb into the past continuous or past simple.

- A: What **were you doing** (you/do) when the phone **rang** (ring)?
 B: I **was watching** (watch) television.
- A: Was Jane busy when you went to see her?
 B: Yes, she (study).
- A: What time (the post / arrive) this morning?
 B: It (come) while I (have) breakfast.
- A: Was Margaret at work today?
 B: No, she (not/go) to work. She was ill.
- A: How fast (you/drive) when the police (stop) you?
 B: I don't know exactly but I (not/drive) very fast.
- A: (your team / win) the football match yesterday?
 B: No, the weather was very bad, so we (not/play).
- A: How (you/break) the window?
 B: We (play) football. I (kick) the ball and it (hit) the window.
- A: (you/see) Jenny last night?
 B: Yes, she (wear) a very nice jacket.
- A: What (you/do) at 2 o'clock this morning?
 B: I was asleep.
- A: I (lose) my key last night.
 B: How (you/get) into your room?
 A: I (climb) in through a window.