

6- Past continuous:

Objectives: This lesson seeks to present the past continuous to learners and how they use it.

6-1 Yesterday James and Paul studied English at university. They started at

8 o'clock and half, and finished at 10: 00.

So, at 9: 00 they were studying English.

They were studying = they were in the middle of studying .

They had not finished studying .

Was/were -ing is the past continuous:

I/she/he/it	was	Playing
We/ you/they	were	studying
		doing

6-2 Vince and Sunderland (2003; p.14) confirmed that the past continuous refers to past actions in progress.

"I was doing something" means that at a particular time, I was already engaged in an activity or situation that had already started but was not yet completed. Take a look at the following examples:

- This time last year I **was working** in Argentina.
- What **were** you **reading** at 11 o'clock last night?

6-3 Frequently, to use both the past simple and the past continuous tenses simultaneously to describe an event that occurred during another event or situation:

- It **was having** a bath when the bell **rang**.
- I **hurt** my finger while I **was working** .
- Paul **phoned** while we **were having** breakfast.

6-4 However, the past simple tense is used to indicate that one event took place after another. For instance:

- while I **was strolling** down the road, I **saw** Paul. So, **stopped** and **had** a conversation.

6-5 Certain verbs (such as 'know' and 'want') are generally not used in the continuous tenses:

- We **knew** each other since 2001. (not we **were knowing**).

- Although we **were having** a good time at the party, Paul **wanted** to leave.. (not **was wanting**). (Murphy, 2012, p. 12).

Exercise:01: Choose between using past continuous or past simple?

- a- Jenny **was waiting** (wait) for me when I **arrived** (arrive).
- b- 'What (you / do) at this time yesterday? 'I was asleep.'
- c- ' (you / go) out last night?' 'No, I was too tired.'
- d- How fast (you / drive) when the accident.....(happen)?
- e- Sam (take) a picture of me while I.....(not / look).
- f- We were in a very difficult position. We(not / know) what to do. (Murphy, 2012, p. 13).