

The background features soft watercolor splashes in shades of pink, peach, and light blue, primarily located in the corners. The rest of the background is filled with a dense distribution of small, multi-colored dots and speckles in blue, orange, grey, and black, creating a confetti-like effect.

Past simple vs past continuous

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Past simple

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◆ What it is

The Past Simple is used to talk about finished actions in the past.

🧱 Structure

- Regular verbs: verb + -ed
 - play → played
- Irregular verbs: memorised form
 - go → went
 - see → saw

Affirmative:

- ✓ Subject + past form

→ She visited her grandmother.

Negative:

- ✓ Subject + did not (didn't) + base verb

→ She didn't visit her grandmother.

Question:

- ✓ Did + subject + base verb

→ Did she visit her grandmother?



Past simple

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When do we use the Past Simple?

Completed actions in the past (with a clear time reference)

→ I watched a movie yesterday.

→ They arrived two hours ago.

A sequence of past actions (one after another)

→ He opened the door, walked inside, and sat down.

Long-term or repeated past habits (no longer true)

→ I lived in France when I was a child.

→ She always played tennis on weekends.



Past continuous

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◆ What it is

The Past Continuous describes an action that was in progress at a specific moment in the past.

🧱 Structure

✓ was/were + verb + -ing

Affirmative:

→ I was studying.

Negative:

→ I wasn't studying.

Question:

→ Were you studying?



Past continuous

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When do we use the Past Continuous?

An action in progress at a specific time in the past

→ At 8 p.m., I was doing my homework.

Two actions happening at the same time

→ She was cooking while I was cleaning.

A longer action interrupted by a shorter action
(MOST IMPORTANT USE!)

- Longer action → Past Continuous
- Shorter action → Past Simple

→ I was walking to school when it started to rain.

→ They were watching TV when the lights went out.

To set the scene in a story

→ The sun was shining, and the birds were singing.



simple or continuous?

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Meaning Past Simple

Completed action

✓ Yes

Action in progress

✗ No

Interrupting action

✓ Usually

Action interrupted

✗ Usually

Background description

✗ Rarely



Meaning Past Continuous

Completed action

✗ No

Action in progress

✓ Yes

Interrupting action

✗ Usually

Action interrupted

✓ Usually

Background description

✓ Yes

simple or continuous?

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Examples Showing the Difference Clearly

A)

- I watched TV last night. → completed
- I was watching TV at 9 p.m. → in progress

B)

- She dropped her phone while she was running.
- (short action → Past Simple)
- (long action → Past Continuous)

C)

- While I was studying, my brother was playing video games.
- (two actions happening at the same time → both continuous)



Tips!

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★ TIP 1: Look for “long action vs. short action”

- Long action → Past Continuous
- Shorter action → Past Simple

Pattern:

➡ I was doing X when Y happened.



Tips!

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★ TIP 2: Time expressions help you choose

Past Simple:

- yesterday
- last night/week/year
- in 2010
- ago
- then
- ➡ These usually indicate a completed action.

Past Continuous:

- while
- when (interruption)
- at (specific time)
- ➡ These usually refer to an action in progress.



Tips!

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★ TIP 3: "While" almost always uses the continuous

- While I was cooking...
- While he was driving...

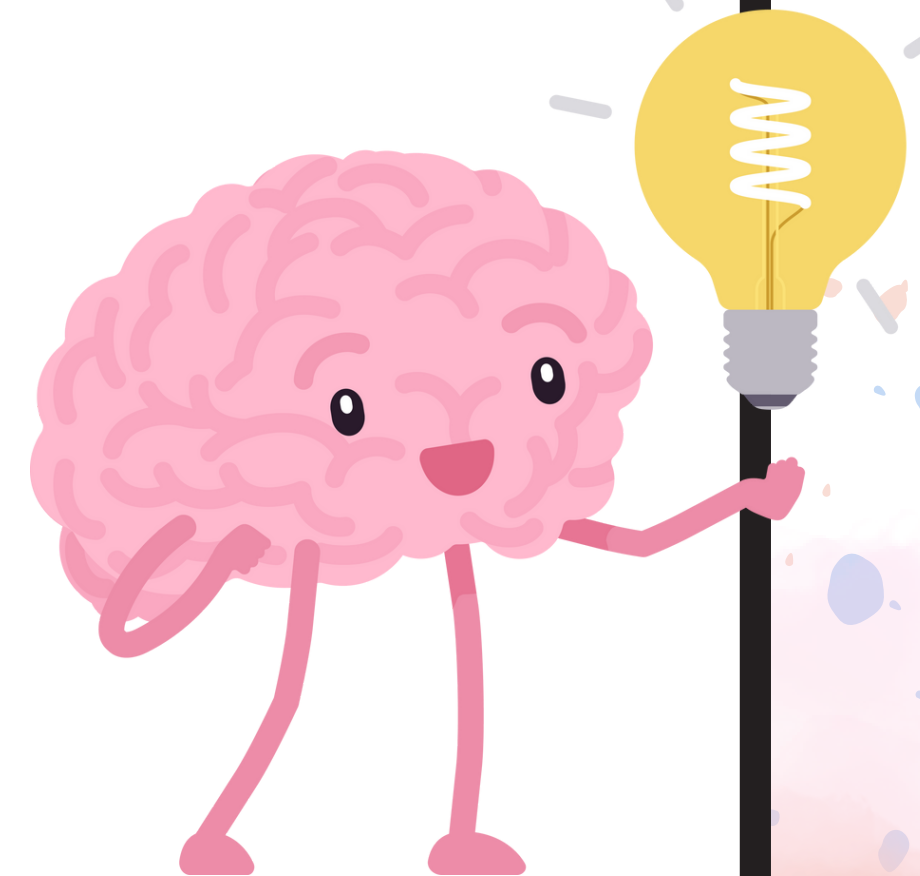
★ TIP 4: Don't use stative verbs in the continuous

(Some verbs describe states, not actions)

Examples: know, like, want, understand, remember

✗ I was knowing the answer.

✓ I knew the answer.



Practice

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Fill in the blank with Past Simple or Past Continuous:

1. I _____ (eat) dinner when you called.
2. They _____ (watch) a movie last night.
3. She _____ (run) when she _____ (fall).
4. We _____ (study) while he _____ (sleep).
5. I _____ (see) her at the store yesterday.

