

Paco's dream comes true: Paco was visiting the city of Brighton when ...



Paco was visiting the city of Brighton when ...

The Past Continuous Tense: affirmative

USE 1. Interrupted Action in the Past.

Use the Past Continuous to indicate that a longer action in the past was interrupted. The interruption is usually a shorter action in the Simple Past. Remember this can be a real interruption or just an interruption in time:

When the phone rang, she was writing a letter.

USE 2. Specific Time as an Interruption.

You can also use a specific time as an interruption:

Yesterday at this time, I was speaking on the phone at work.

USE 3. Parallel actions.

When you use the Past Continuous with two actions in the same sentence, it expresses the idea that both actions were happening at the same time. The actions are parallel.

I was studying English while my flatmates were making dinner.

USE 4. Atmosphere.

The English language sometimes uses a series of parallel actions to describe the atmosphere at a particular time in the past:

When I got home, my sister was watching television, my mother was reading a book, my father was speaking on the phone and my grandparents were playing chess in the sitting room.

USE 5. Irritation with always.

The Past Continuous with adverbs like *always* or *constantly* expresses the idea that something irritating often happened in the past:

I didn't like that teacher because he was always shouting.

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The Past Continuous Tense: negative

Remember the structure to form the negative form in past continuous:

Past to be + not + verb -ing + complements

I / he / she was studying English at the library.

*I / he / she **wasn't** studying English at the library.*

You / we / they were doing the washing-up.

*You / we / they **weren't** doing the washing up.*

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The Past Continuous vs. the Past Simple

A DIFFERENCE IN USE BETWEEN THE SIMPLE PAST AND THE PAST CONTINUOUS

In the Simple Past, a specific time is used to show when an action began or finished:

*Yesterday at midnight I listened to the radio
(I started listening to it at midnight)*

However, in the Past Continuous a specific time only interrupts the action:

*Yesterday at midnight I was listening to the radio
(I started earlier than midnight. At midnight I was already listening to the radio)*

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The past ending pronunciation: /id/

If a verb itself ends in a /t/ or a /d/ sound, the final -ed is pronounced /id/

Decide > decided **/id/**

Want > wanted **/id/**

The /id/ ending pronunciation is the only ending that is pronounced with an additional syllable:

"want" (one syllable) becomes "wanted" and is pronounced "want/id/" (two syllables)

"need" (one syllable) becomes "needed" and is pronounced "need/id/" (two syllables)

"decide" (two syllables) becomes "decided" and is pronounced "decide/id/" (three syllables)