

Use

- The Past Simple expresses a past action that is now finished.
We **played** tennis last Sunday.
I **worked** in London from 1994 to 1999.
John **left** two minutes ago.
- Notice the time expressions that are used with the Past Simple.

I did it
last year.
last month.
five years ago.
yesterday morning.
in 1985.

3.2 Past Continuous

Form

was/were + -ing
(present participle)

Positive and negative

I	was	working.
He	wasn't (was not)	
She		
It		
We	were	
You	weren't (were not)	
They		

Question

What	was	I he she it	doing?
	were	we you they	

Short answer

Were you working yesterday?	Yes, I was.
Was she studying when you arrived?	No, she wasn't.

Use

- The Past Continuous expresses a past activity that has duration.
I met her while I **was living** in Paris.
You **were making** a lot of noise last night.
What **were you doing**?
- The activity began *before* the action expressed by the Past Simple.
She **was making** coffee when we arrived.
When I phoned Simon he **was having** dinner.
- The Past Continuous expresses an activity in progress before, and probably after, a time in the past.
When I woke up this morning, the sun **was shining**.
What **were you doing** at 8.00 last night?

3.3 Past Simple and Past Continuous

- The Past Simple expresses past actions as simple facts.
I **did** my homework last night.
'What **did you do** yesterday evening?' 'I **watched** TV.'
- The Past Continuous gives past activities time and duration. The activity can be interrupted.
'What **were you doing** at 8.00?' 'I **was watching** TV.'
I **was doing** my homework when Jane arrived.
- In stories, the Past Continuous can describe the scene. The Past Simple tells the action.
It **was** a beautiful day. The sun **was shining** and the birds **were singing**, so we **decided** to go for a picnic. We **put** everything in the car ...
- The questions below refer to different time periods. The Past Continuous asks about activities before, and the Past Simple asks about what happened after.

What were you doing	when it started to rain?	We were playing tennis.
What did you do		We went home.

3.4 Prepositions in time expressions

at	in	no preposition
at six o'clock at midnight at New Year at the weekend	in the morning/afternoon/evening in December in summer in 1995 in two weeks' time	today yesterday tomorrow the day after tomorrow the day before yesterday last night last week two weeks ago next month yesterday evening tomorrow evening this evening tonight
on		
on Saturday on Monday morning on New Year's Day on January 18		