**Lecture:10**

Past Progressive

1. Formation

The past progressive uses was/were + -ing:

**I was working.**

**She was not reading.**

**Were you listening to me?**

**2. Use**

We use the past progressive to say that something was in progress (going on) around a particular past time.

“What were you doing at eight o’clock yesterday?” – “I was watching TV.”

(NOT “What did you do …?” – “I watched TV.”)

We often use the past progressive together with the past simple. The past progressive refers to a longer ‘background’ action or situation; the past simple refers to a shorter action or event that happened in the middle of the longer action, or that interrupted it.

**As I was walking down the road, I saw Patrick.**

**The phone rang while I was having dinner.**

Because we often use the past progressive to talk about something that is a ‘background’, not the main ‘news’, we can make something seem less important. Compare:

**I had lunch with the President yesterday.**

(important piece of news)

I **was having lunch with the President yesterday, and she said…**

(as if there was nothing special for the speaker about lunching with the President.)

The past progressive is not the normal tense for talking about repeated or habitual past actions. (Use the past simple here.)

I rang the bell six times.

When I was a child we made our own amusements.