

1

Present simple and present continuous

I'm holding my breath.

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Friday night

It's midnight and **I'm holding** my breath.
I feel so scared that I can't move.
 There it is again – a noise downstairs. **I think** there's someone in the house.
 'Don't be silly!' **I say** to myself. (**I'm** always **lying** awake at night and listening to noises. Usually **I find out** it's the fridge or someone next door or ... just nothing.)
I'm staying at my friend's house. Round here all the houses **have got** two floors. My friend **doesn't live** in a safe part of town and sometimes **burglars come in** through the downstairs windows.
 I've prepared for this moment. This is what you do:
 1 You **lock** the door as quietly as you can. 2 You **phone** the police on your mobile. 3 You **talk** to the police very loudly.
 There's the noise again ... and it's **getting** closer.
 I **don't want** to do this. I **get** slowly out of bed. But then I **stop**. Two round eyes **are looking** at me.
 I **scream**.
 The neighbour's cat **runs** back the way it came. How did it get in? Probably through the downstairs window.
 But that **means** the downstairs window is open ...



- 1 Where is the writer of the story?
- 2 What is making the noise?

Answers: 1 The writer is at his or her friend's house. The writer is in bed upstairs.
 2 The neighbour's cat

Present simple and present continuous

Present simple

- 1 Add an -s for third person forms in present simple statements.
 All other forms stay the same.
I / you / we / they run.
He / she / it runs.
- 2 Make negative forms of regular verbs with **don't** and **doesn't**.
I don't want to do this.
My friend doesn't live in a safe part of town.
 NOT ... *doesn't lives* ...

- 3 Use the present simple for things that are always or usually true.
He doesn't live in a safe part of town.
- 4 Use the present simple for regular or repeated events and habits.
I visit my friend every month.

- 5 We often use the present simple with adverbs of frequency, e.g. *always, never, usually*.
Usually I find out it's the fridge or someone next door ... or just nothing.
- 6 We often use the present simple to give instructions or directions.
 1 You **lock** the door as quietly as you can.
 2 You **phone** the police on your mobile.
- 7 We often use the present simple to tell a story, or to describe a series of events as they happen.
I get slowly out of bed. But then I stop.
- 8 We often use the present simple for a review (of a book or a film, for example).
*The film tells the story of a boy who lives in the poorest part of the city. It **has** an unexpected ending.*
- 12 Use the present continuous with *always, constantly* or *forever* to criticise.
*I'm always **hearing** noises.*
- 13 Use the present continuous to talk about situations which are gradually changing.
*The noise is **getting** louder.*
- 14 We often use the present continuous to describe the background to a story. We use the present simple to describe the events.
*It's midnight and I'm **holding** my breath.
 'Don't be silly!' I say to myself.*
- 15 We don't usually use the present continuous with state verbs (which describe states, not actions), e.g. *want, sound, believe, mean, promise*.
*I **don't want** to do this.
 That **means** the downstairs window is open.*

TIP

Have got means the same as *have*.
Have got is more common in informal and British English.
*I've got three brothers. = I have three brothers.
 I haven't got any sisters. = I don't have any sisters.*
 A: *Have you got any children?*
 B: Yes, *I have.* / No, *I haven't.*
 = A: *Do you have any children?* B: Yes, *I do.* / No, *I don't.*

Present continuous

- 9 Make present continuous sentences with *am / is / are + verb + -ing*.
*I'm always **lying** awake.
 It's **getting** closer.
 Two round eyes **are looking** at me.*
- 10 Use the present continuous to describe an activity in progress now or around now.
*Two round eyes **are looking** at me.
 I'm **studying** two languages: English and Spanish.*
- 11 Use the present continuous to talk about unfinished or temporary actions.
*I'm **staying** at my friend's.*

TIP

Note the difference:
*He **lives** in a beautiful flat. (The speaker doesn't think this situation will change soon.)
 He's **living** in the north of the city at the moment. (The speaker thinks this is a temporary situation.)*

TIP

We often use the present simple in formal letters and emails.

*I write to inform you that ...
 I look forward to meeting you.*

We often use the present continuous in more informal letters and emails.

*I'm writing to let you know that ...
 I'm looking forward to seeing you.*

- See Unit 8 for the present simple and present continuous with future meaning.

Practice

A Underline the correct option.

It's the middle of the afternoon. In a quiet neighbourhood a burglar ¹tries / is trying to break into a house. He ²creeps / is creeping round the house when he ³hears / is hearing a voice. 'Spider-Man ⁴watches / is watching you!' The burglar ⁵turns / is turning round quickly but he ⁶doesn't see / isn't seeing anything. So he ⁷starts / is starting creeping across the garden again. 'Spider-Man ⁸watches / is watching you!' The burglar ⁹hears / is hearing the voice again and this time he ¹⁰sees / is seeing a parrot. The parrot ¹¹sits / is sitting by the side of the house. ¹²Do you talk / Are you talking to me?' ¹³asks / is asking the burglar. 'Yes,' ¹⁴says / is saying the parrot. 'How do you do? I'm Batman.' 'That's a silly name,' ¹⁵laughs / is laughing the burglar. 'Why ¹⁶does your owner call / is your owner calling you that?' 'I have no idea,' ¹⁷replies / is replying the parrot, 'and ¹⁸I don't know / I'm not knowing why the **rottweiler's** name is Spider-Man.' 'I ¹⁹don't want / am not wanting to find out!' the burglar ²⁰says / is saying. And he ²¹runs / is running away!

B Match each text 1–5 to a description a–e. Then complete the texts using the words in brackets and either the present simple or the present continuous.

1 c

You go (go) along this street and you turn (turn) left at the end. The shop is on your right.

2

As oil prices rise, the cost of air travel increases (increase). Reports show that as a result more and more people stay (stay) at home for their holidays and don't travel (not travel) abroad.

4

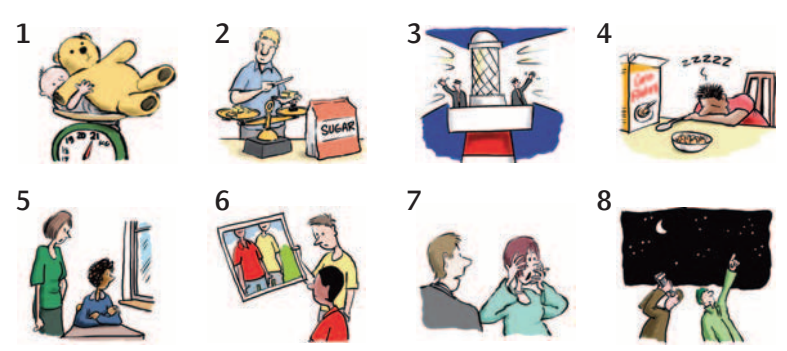
I work (work) at the garage until September.

C Match the pairs.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1 At last the sun | a is coming out. |
| 2 The sun | b always comes after rain. |
| 3 They're not staying | a at home in the evenings. |
| 4 They don't usually stay | b in the country for very long. |
| 5 The sea level on Earth | a is rising. |
| 6 The sun | b rises early. |
| 7 In the mountains | a it's getting cold. |
| 8 Come and have your dinner – | b it gets cold. |
| 9 I'm looking forward | a to meeting you at the interview tomorrow. |
| 10 We look forward | b to seeing you in town tomorrow. |

D Complete the sentences using the verbs from the box in the present simple or present continuous. Each verb is used twice.

not have not look think weigh



- 1 The child weighs 21 kilos.
 2 He weighs all the ingredients for a cake.
 3 They don't have any pets.
 4 Alex isn't looking breakfast this morning.
 5 What is he thinking about?
 6 What is she looking at of this photo?
 7 You are very happy.
 8 You won't find it. You aren't looking in the right place.

3

What annoys me about my sister? Well, she always talks (always talk) to her friends on the phone! And she always loses (always lose) things.

5

I enjoyed this. It's about a guy who goes (go) round the world and travels (travel) on as many different forms of transport as possible.

- a a description of change
- b a book review
- c directions
- d criticism
- e temporary situation

E Complete the questions using the verbs in brackets in either the present simple or present continuous.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 A: <i>Do you know</i> that woman? (know) | B: No, I've never met her before. |
| 2 A: When ? (get home) | B: Usually at about 4. |
| 3 A: Where she ? (go) | B: To the shop, I think. |
| 4 A: you ? (agree) | B: Yes, I think you are right. |
| 5 A: Why ? (laugh) | B: I just heard a funny joke. |
| 6 A: his name ? (remember) | B: I think it began with B. |
| 7 A: What ? (read) | B: It's a novel by a new young writer. |
| 8 A: Why ? (cry) | B: It's a really sad film. |

F Complete the sentences in an appropriate way.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 First of all, the oven has to be hot <i>and then you put the cake in for 20 minutes</i> | 4 |
| 2 because he's a vegetarian. | 5 but she wants to be a doctor one day. |
| 3 On Saturday I work in a café all day but | 6 Hurry up - |
| | 7 Look - |
| | 8 I'm an only child - |
| | 9 He makes me angry - |

MY TURN!

Complete the descriptions by inventing answers to the questions.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Where are you? And what are you doing?
<i>I'm in bed and I'm sleeping.</i> | 4 Where are you? And what are you doing?
..... |
| What happens next? <i>The alarm rings. I turn it off and go back to sleep.</i> | What happens next? <i>I see someone famous and I go up to her.</i> |
| How do you feel? <i>I feel tired.</i> | How do you feel? |
| 2 When is it? And where are you?
..... | 5 When is it? And what are you doing?
..... |
| What happens next? <i>I see my brother.</i> | What happens next? <i>The car breaks down.</i> |
| How do you feel? | How do you feel? |
| 3 When is it? And where are you?
..... | 6 When is it? And what are you doing?
..... |
| What happens next? <i>The lights go out.</i> | What happens next? <i>A stranger comes up to me.</i> |
| How do you feel? | How do you feel? |

MY TEST!

Circle the correct option.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 The Pyrenees on the border between France and Spain. | a lie b lies c are lying |
| 2 This bag to me. | a doesn't belongs b doesn't belong c isn't belonging |
| 3 We sometimes the car racing in the holidays. | a watch b watches c are watching |
| 4 It's Sunday and I'm bored. It heavily. | a rain b rains c is raining |
| 5 This film is great - I it! | a really like b am really like d am really liking |

My Test answers: 1a 2b 3a 4c 5a

2

Past simple and past continuous

He was driving on a dark night.



Casey Jones (1863–1900) **was** an American railway driver. He **became** a **hero** when he **died** because he **saved** the lives of many **passengers** in a terrible accident.

On 30 April 1900 Casey **was driving** his train back to the station during a dark and wet night. He was with another driver, his friend Webb. The train **was going** fast because Casey **wanted** to get back quickly but this **wasn't** the problem. There **was** another train on the same railway. Casey and Webb **didn't know** about this train.

As Casey was coming around a bend, he saw the other train. Casey realised the danger. 'Jump!' he shouted to his friend. Webb **jumped** from the train while Casey **was trying** to stop. Webb **fell** 100 metres but he **didn't die**. While **he was falling**, he **heard** Casey. Casey **was shouting**, 'Help!' The train **was going** fast, so it **couldn't stop** quickly. Casey **slowed** the train down but it still **crashed**. Casey **was killed** but the passengers **didn't die**.

Casey **became** very famous after this and his friend **wrote** a very popular song, *The Ballad of Casey Jones*, about him.



Underline the correct options:

- Casey is a hero because he *saved many lives* / *wrote a song*.
- Webb was a *driver* / *passenger*.

Answers: 1. saved many lives 2. driver

Past simple and past continuous

Past simple

- Add *-ed* to make the past simple (regular) for all persons. Use *did not* with the infinitive without *to* to make the negative and use *did* to make a question.

	statement ✓	negative ✗
I / You / He / She / It / We / They	started.	did not (didn't) start.

question ?	short answer ✓ ✗
Did I / you / he / she / it / we / they start?	Yes, (I) did. No, (I) did not (didn't).

2 Many common verbs have irregular forms for past simple statements, e.g. *go* → *went*, *see* → *saw*, *be* → *was* / *were*.

Casey went to the station.
We saw the crash.

▶ See page 203 for a list of irregular verbs.

3 Use the past simple for past actions, states and facts.

Casey lived in the USA.
Millions of immigrants moved to the USA in the nineteenth century.

4 We usually use the past simple for repeated or usual actions or situations.

While I was on the train, Mike called twice.
Casey walked to work every day.

Past continuous

5 Make the past continuous using the verb *was* / *were* + verb + *-ing*.

	statement ✓	negative ✗
I / You / We / They	were working.	were not (weren't) working.
He / She / It	was working.	was not (wasn't) working.

Make questions and short answers as follows:

question ?	short answer ✓✗
Were you / we / they working?	Yes, (we) were. No, (we) weren't.
Was I / he / she / it working?	Yes, (he) was. No, (he) wasn't.

6 Use the past continuous (e.g. *was walking*, *were living*, etc.) to talk about events which were in progress at a particular time in the past.

On 30 April Casey was driving his train back to the station.
What was he doing the day before?

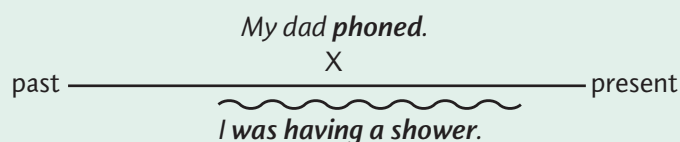
7 Use the past continuous for a description of simultaneous ongoing situations.

It was raining, so we weren't driving fast.
What were the passengers doing while this was happening?

Past simple and past continuous

8 We can use the past simple with the past continuous in the same sentence. The past simple is a shorter action / event that happens in the middle of, or interrupts, a longer past continuous action / event.

My dad phoned while I was having a shower.



9 Use the past continuous to give the reason for a past event, or to set the background to a story – to talk about what was going on when an event happened.

The train was going fast, so it couldn't stop quickly.
I was listening to the radio when I heard the news.

When, while and as

10 Use *when*, *while* or *as* to link past simple and past continuous verbs. Use *when* before the past simple or the past continuous verb. Use *while* before the past continuous verb.

While he was falling, he heard Casey.
I didn't say anything when / while the police were asking questions.

11 Use *when* to join past simple events that are consecutive.

The train stopped when it arrived at the station.
When the phone rang, Jack answered it.

12 We usually use *when* with states, e.g. ages.

They left America when they were children.
Casey died when he was 37.

13 We usually use *as* to describe two short events that happen simultaneously, or two events that change together.

As the train crashed, everyone screamed.
As the train went faster, Casey worked harder.

TIP

Use *during* to say when something happened.
 Use *for* to say how long something went on.

The train crashed during the night.
He was a train driver for 10 years.
I was working during my holidays and didn't see her for three weeks.

Practice

A Write the past simple forms of these verbs.

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 drive – <i>drove</i> | 2 do – |
| 3 have – | 4 get – |
| 5 open – | 6 eat – |
| 7 swim – | 8 shout – |
| 9 fall – | 10 try – |
| 11 know – | 12 become – |

B Complete the sentences using the verbs from the box in the past continuous.

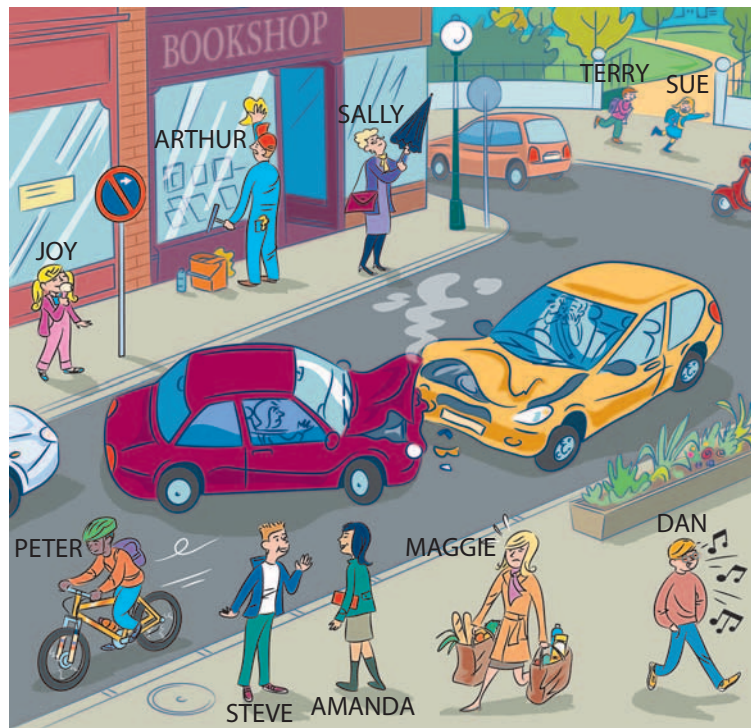
cry dream ~~drive~~ have live not play
not snow wait watch not work

- Max *was driving* his car to work when it happened.
- The baby very loudly, so I couldn't hear.
- you TV all night?
- I couldn't call you because our phone
- While we for the bus, it started to rain.
- John in London when you met him?
- My mum and dad a coffee in the kitchen.
- It but it was very cold.
- Did it really happen or I only
- Glenn and Kirsten in the game last Saturday.

C Match the pairs.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1 When I got home, | a I made dinner. |
| | b I was making dinner. |
| 2 The bottle smashed | a as it fell on the floor. |
| | b while it was falling on the floor. |
| 3 After the teacher finished, | a the students asked some questions. |
| | b the students were asking some questions. |
| 4 What music did you like | a while you were 11 years old? |
| | b when you were 11 years old? |
| 5 I wasn't working | a during two years. |
| | b for two years. |
| 6 Clare was working in Oxford | a as Mike studied at night school. |
| | b while Mike was studying at night school. |
| 7 We started | a when everything was ready. |
| | b while everything was ready. |
| 8 Was Susan wearing the same dress | a when she came in? |
| | b when she was coming in? |

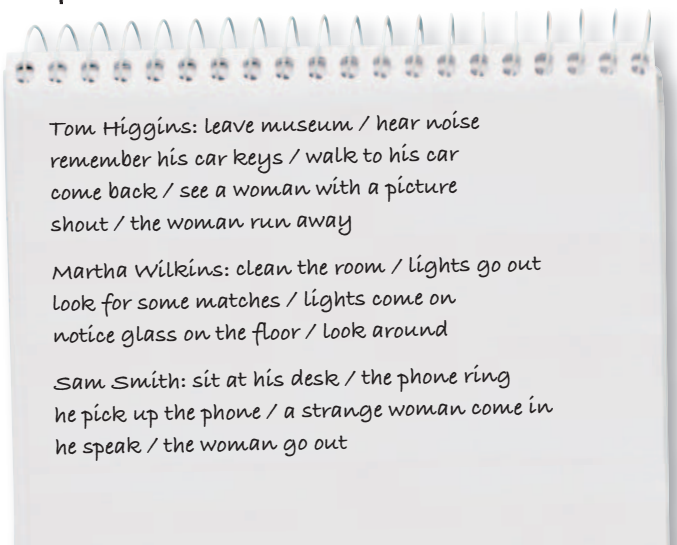
D This accident happened yesterday. Write what the people were doing at the time of the accident.



When the accident happened ...

- Joy was eating an ice cream.*
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

E Someone stole a picture from the museum last night. Read the detective's notebook with information from three museum workers, then use the notes to write sentences. Every sentence should have one verb in the past simple and one in the past continuous.



- 1 *Tom was leaving the museum when he heard a noise.*
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

F Circle the correct option.

Dick Whittington (1358–1423) was a famous mayor of London. The story says that Dick was a poor boy who ¹... to London to become rich. Dick ²... his cat with him for company. Life was very hard in London. Dick worked as a servant ³... some months but he got very little money and all he had was his cat. Finally, Dick decided to give his cat to a merchant and leave London. As he ⁴... down the street, he ⁵... a voice in his head. The voice said, 'Come back, Dick, you will be Mayor of London three times!' Dick came back. At the same time, the merchant and his men ⁶... by ship to another country. It was a good ship but there was a big problem: rats! Rats ⁷... everywhere on the ship and no one ⁸... them. Luckily, Dick's cat was very good at catching rats. The merchant was very happy with the cat and gave Dick a nice present when he ⁹... home.

Dick now had some money and he started his own business. He also married a rich woman. Dick ¹⁰... mayor of London three times and ¹¹... he died he left a lot of money. The story does not say what ¹²... to his cat.



- 1 a was coming **b came** c has come d comes
- 2 a was taking **b were taking** c took d taken
- 3 a for **b during** c in d at
- 4 a walks **b is walking** c has walked
d was walking
- 5 a hear **b heard** c was hearing
d were hearing
- 6 a travels **b travelled** c was travelling
d were travelling
- 7 a is running **b are running** c was running
d were running
- 8 a has caught **b could catch** c did catch
d didn't catch
- 9 a get **b got** c gotten d was getting
- 10 a did become **b become**
c was becoming d did becoming
- 11 a as **b while** c when d since
- 12 a happens **b happened**
c did happen d was happening

MY TURN!

Complete the sentences to make them true for you.

- 1 When I got home yesterday, *my sister was playing a computer game*
- 2
during the summer.
- 3 While I was having breakfast,
- 4 It was very late when
- 5
as I was going to my friend's.
- 6 When I was 10,

MY TEST!

Circle the correct option.

- 1 the train stopped, all the passengers got off. a When b While c As
- 2 I didn't interrupt Casey because he to Webb. a spoke b was speaking c were speaking
- 3 Webb was a driver a long time. a during b since c for
- 4 What Casey's wife when she heard the news? a was ... saying b did ... say c has ... said
- 5 Casey's friend never by train again. a didn't travel b travelled c was travelling

My Test answers: 1a 2b 3c 4b 5b