

Name: _____ Date: _____

Past Simple vs Past Continuous Tense

Past Continuous

Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the **Past Continuous** form of the verb in parentheses.

1. Sally _____ (play) tennis at 4:00 yesterday afternoon.
2. Phil _____ (drink) a cup of coffee when the phone rang.
3. Mallory _____ (talk) to her boyfriend when her roommate walked in.
4. Was Howie _____ (live) in Chicago at the time of the Great Chicago Fire?
5. Susan _____ (work) for two different community colleges, but she quit when one of them offered her a full-time job.
6. Will _____ (date) Julie when he realized that he liked Beth more.
7. _____ Callie really _____ (talk) to ghosts yesterday afternoon?
8. Our friends _____ (get) married when the tornado hit.
9. _____ you _____ (eat) alligator when I saw you yesterday?
10. Why _____ they _____ (leave) the party when I arrived?

Past Simple

Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the **Past Simple** form of the verb in parentheses.

1. Sally _____ (win) four tennis championships last year.
2. Phil _____ (drink) coffee all afternoon, so now it's 11:30 pm, and he can't sleep.
3. Mallory _____ (date) her last boyfriend for a week.
4. How long _____ Howie _____ (live) in Chicago before he moved to New York?
5. Susan _____ (work) for Trident Community College for seven months, and now she works for Wake Technical Community College.
6. Will _____ (write) love letters to Beth for one year, and then she agreed to go out with him.
7. Callie _____ (communicate) with ghosts for the last few years of her life.
8. Our friends _____ (fight) all the time. That's probably why they broke up.
9. _____ you _____ (eat) my pizza? I can't find it in the refrigerator.
10. Where _____ you _____ (go) every night last week?

Correct Order

Put the words in the following sentences in the correct order.

1. was / I / when you called. / eating / doughnuts

2. the violin / Lauren / for several years. / played

3. at noon? / Why / you / just arriving to work / were

4. she / cry / Did / when you told her?

5. very hard / Alex / worked / last week.

6. Patricia / her husband / six / babysitting / children / was / while / playing golf. / was

7. emails / answering / I / at 9:00 this morning. / was

8. write emails / you / all morning? / Did (It is now afternoon.)

9. did / What / John / work on yesterday?

10. worked / on the car / John / yesterday.

Analyzing Verb Tenses

Look at each of the sentences in the Practice section. Answer the following questions:

1. Which verb tense comes with a time clause that explains a precise moment in the past?

2. Which verb tense comes with a time clause that explains a time span in the past?

3. Which words/phrases indicate a precise moment?

4. Which words/phrases indicate a time span?

5. Which verb tense indicates that an activity took longer than just one moment?

6. Which verbs were never used on the Past Continuous tense? Why not?

7. Which verb tense is used to show an interruption?

8. Which verb tense is used for the action that was interrupted?

ANSWER KEY

Past Continuous

1. was playing
2. was drinking
3. was talking
4. living
5. was working
6. was dating
7. Was (Callie really) talking
8. were getting
9. Were (you) eating
10. were (they) leaving

Past Simple

1. won
2. drank
3. dated
4. did (Howie) live
5. worked
6. wrote
7. communicated
8. fought
9. Did (you) eat
10. did (you) go

Correct Order

1. I was eating doughnuts when you called.
2. Lauren played the violin for several years.
3. Why were you just arriving to work at noon?
4. Did she cry when you told her?
5. Alex worked very hard last week.
6. Patricia was babysitting six children while her husband was playing golf.
7. I was answering emails at 9:00 this morning.
8. Did you write emails all morning?
9. What did John work on yesterday?
10. John worked on the car yesterday.

Analyzing Verb Tenses

1. Past Continuous
2. Past Simple
3. At, when, while
4. Yesterday, last week/month/year, in (a year/month that is finished), this morning/afternoon/evening (if it is later than the time given), ago
5. Past Continuous
6. Stative verbs - be, have, believe, like. Stative verbs are not usually used in continuous tenses. Only active verbs are used in continuous tense.
7. Past Simple
8. Past Continuous