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Grammar & Vocabulary Practice

Intermediate - B1


mmpublications

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unit | **04** | Past Progressive – Past Simple vs Past Progressive

Last Sunday was a hot sunny day, so we **decided** to go to the park. When we **arrived**, a lot of people **were** there. Some **were sitting** near the lake, others **were having** lunch and some children **were playing** football. While I **was chatting** with my good friend, Tom, we **heard** somebody screaming. A little boy **was drowning**. Suddenly, a young man **dived** into the lake and **saved** the boy. It **was** really brave of him!



Past Progressive

I was resting	He was resting
Were you resting?	Was she resting?
We weren't resting	They weren't resting

We use the **Past Progressive**:

- to describe an action in progress at a specific point of time in the past.

I was fixing my car at 10:00 yesterday morning.

- to describe temporary past actions or situations.

Bob was working as a volunteer in those days.

- for repeated actions or annoying habits (with adverbs of frequency: *always, usually, etc.*)

My younger sister was always borrowing my clothes without asking me first.

- to describe background scenes to a story.

There were a lot of people in the kitchen. The top chef was giving them instructions. Some of them were washing the vegetables while some others were preparing the dishes.

- for actions that were happening at the same time in the past (usually with *while/as*).

While Brenda was making a salad, Kate was watching TV.

- for an action that was in progress in the past when it was interrupted by another action.*

Danny was making a model plane when his sister entered his bedroom.

But also: *Danny's sister entered his bedroom while/as when he was making a model plane.*

* We use the **Past Progressive** for the longer action and the **Past Simple** for the shorter action. Note the use of **when, while, as** in the examples.

Grammar Practice

A Complete the sentences with the **Past Simple** or the **Past Progressive** of the verbs in brackets.

- I _____ (watch) a documentary when I _____ (hear) a noise coming from the kitchen.
- As Jack _____ (drive) home, he _____ (have) an accident.
- Sandra _____ (cook) while her husband _____ (read) his newspaper.
- While I _____ (jog) in the park, my brother _____ (play) with his son.
- Jason _____ (want) to buy a leather jacket but he _____ (not/have) enough money with him.
- When Peter _____ (enter) the office, the others _____ (have) a meeting.
- While Sean _____ (work) on his laptop, his brother _____ (fix) his bicycle.
- Last night Ben _____ (call) John, but he _____ (not/answer) the phone because he _____ (be) out in the garden.

B Expand the notes into sentences using the words given and the Past Simple or the Past Progressive.

1. Terry / phone / cousin / get / home

when

2. Rita / hear / bad / news / she / start / crying

when

3. Kevin / talk / on / mobile / his brother / play / computer games

while

4. I / walk / down / street / I / meet / old friend

as

5. We / have / dinner / Donald / drop by

when

C Complete the text with the Past Simple or the Past Progressive of the verbs in brackets.

Last Saturday we (1) _____ (decide) to eat out at a new Chinese restaurant, that (2) _____ (open) in our neighbourhood. While my parents and I (3) _____ (enjoy) our exotic meal, my two younger brothers (4) _____ (begin) to complain about the food. They (5) _____ (not/like) it at all, so they soon (6) _____ (get) bored. While we (7) _____ (eat), they (8) _____ (start) to chase each other around the restaurant. As they (9) _____ (run) in between the tables, they (10) _____ (push) a waiter who (11) _____ (fall) on one of the tables. Unfortunately, the waiter (12) _____ (hold) a bottle of coke, which (13) _____ (fly) into the air and (14) _____ (land) on an old lady. We (15) _____ (not/can) believe what (16) _____ (happen). The old lady's husband (17) _____ (shout) at my brothers while she (18) _____ (complain) that her dress was ruined. It (19) _____ (take) my father half an hour to calm them down! What a mess!

D Choose the correct answer, a, b, c or d.

1. Tom _____ when the postman rang his doorbell.

- a. slept c. sleeps
b. is sleeping d. was sleeping

2. _____ Mary got to school, she went straight to her classroom.

- a. As c. As soon
b. When d. While

3. _____ you know what time it is?

- a. Are c. Were
b. Did d. Do

4. When I _____ Ken at the railway station yesterday, he was talking to his cousin, Al.

- a. see c. saw
b. was seeing d. 'm seeing

5. When we were children, my brother _____ me what to do and I hated it.

- a. has always told c. was always telling
b. is always telling d. always tells

6. Ron _____ his first car in 2008.

- a. bought c. buys
b. was buying d. is buying

7. I didn't _____ to my brother last night, because when I got home, he was sleeping.

- a. spoke c. spoken
b. speaking d. speak

8. I met Carl last year, while we _____ abroad.

- a. study c. were studying
b. studied d. are studying

Vocabulary Practice

A Complete the sentences using the correct form of the phrasal verbs given below.

take up: start an activity or hobby
take off: remove (clothes), leave the ground (for a plane)
take on: accept a job or responsibility
take after: look like (an older relative), resemble

turn up: appear
turn on/off: start/stop operating
turn down: refuse, reject
turn out: prove to be

1. Look at Jennifer's baby boy. He obviously _____ his grandfather.
2. I'm really sorry, but I'm so busy with that new project. I can't _____ any more responsibilities.
3. We had an appointment at 5:00, but Walter didn't _____ at all. I hope nothing bad happened to him.
4. The doctor told John that he needed more exercise, so he decided to _____ tennis to keep fit.
5. Could you please _____ the lights? It's very dark in here and I can't work.
6. Bruce _____ the job offer because he didn't want to work in shifts.
7. The police officer couldn't believe it at first, but Tracy's conspiracy theories _____ to be true.
8. Hurry up, Martin. Our plane is _____ in ten minutes and you're still here drinking your coffee!

B Complete the sentences using the correct form of the verbs given in the box.

spill (v): fall or spread outside the limits of sth

pour (v): make a liquid flow from a container

nod (v): move your head up and down to express agreement or approval

shake (one's head) (v): move your head from side to side, to show disagreement

raise (v): lift to a higher position

rise (v): go upwards

1. As Larry was trying to _____ some juice into my glass, he _____ it on the table.
2. I asked Barbara and Rita if they wanted to go to the zoo and they _____ enthusiastically.
3. Alex and Jeff _____ their hands to answer the teacher's question.
4. I'm really sorry for _____ coffee on your silk shirt, sir.
5. Look! Their hot-air balloon _____ slowly up into the air. Isn't it fantastic?
6. The children didn't like the soup, so when their mother asked them if they wanted more, they just _____ their heads.