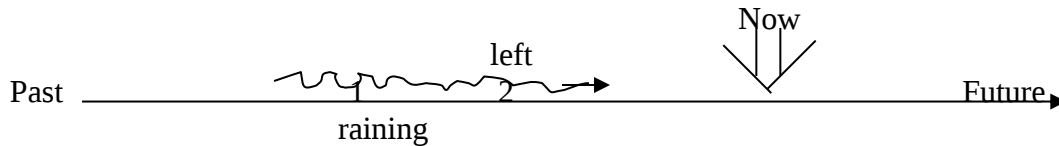


IV- Past Continuous

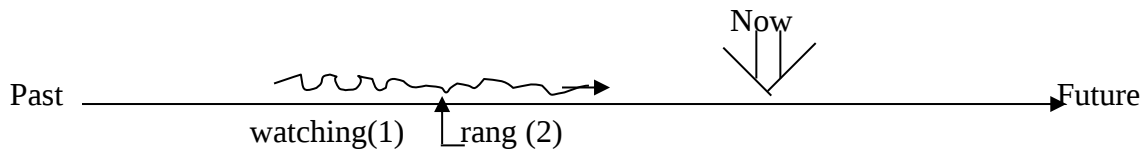
- 1- The past progressive or the past continuous is used to show that a state or action was in progress in the past, i.e. it continued for a temporary period but not up to the present.

e.g. It was raining ¹ when the doctor left ² his house this morning.



An action (2) may interrupt another action (1).

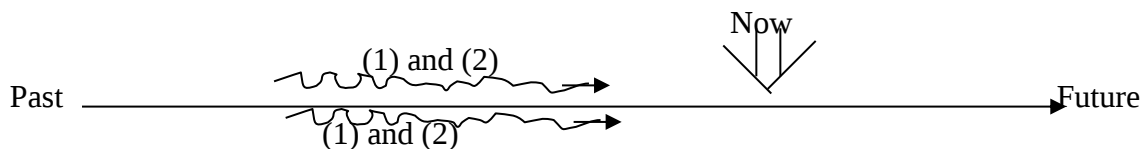
e.g. The telephone rang when we were watching TV.



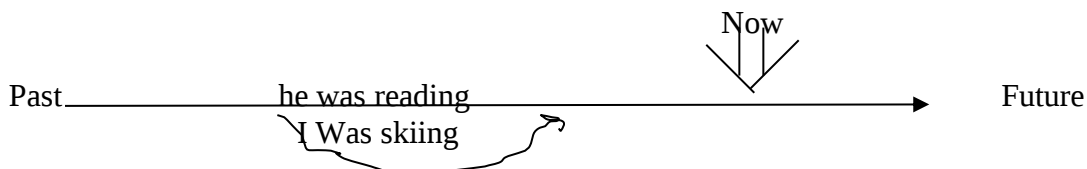
e.g. While I was driving (1) my car from Roma to Naples, my car broke (2) down.

- 2- We use the past progressive for both actions (1) and (2) if both were continuing at the same time.

e.g. I was mending the TV while my wife was reading.
As I was driving to Rome, I was listening to music on the car radio.



e.g. While he was skiing, I was reading.
I was reading while he was skiing. **Or** We use the past continuous in both clauses



Note1: In informal conversation, some people use **when** with the past continuous.

e.g. Sorry, I wasn't listening **when** you were talking.

- 3- We use the past progressive as the only verb in a sentence to talk about a continuing action at a point (1) or during a period of time (2).

e.g. What were you doing { at 8 o'clock → (1)
Between 8 and 9 → (2)
I was having breakfast { at 8 o'clock → (1)
Between 8 and 9 → (2)

Note2: If the past time or period you are thinking of is clear, you don't need to mention it.

e.g. Harry got up early to feed the animals. It was a beautiful day, and the birds were singing. (i.e. ... 'when he got up')

Note3: The past progressive can refer not only to past time but to the unreal present. It can be used in an **if- clause** with a **would-condition**.

e.g. "You're not gaining weight." ' no, but I'd be happier if I were losing weight. / weit/

Note4: The past progressive can refer to the future in the past, especially in indirect speech.

e.g. When I told Pam that I was getting married (next month), she wouldn't believe me.

Present Progressive Versus Past Progressive in indirect speech

Present Progressive	Past Progressive
e.g. 'Be quiet. I'm talking on the phone.'	She told us to be quiet because she was talking on the phone.

Note the difference between :

- Sheila was reading a book last night.
(we don't know if she finished the book)
- and**
- Sheila read a book last night.
(She probably finished the book)

Exercise1: What were you doing at the following times? Write one sentence as in the examples.

The past continuous is not always necessary (see the second example).

- 1- (at 8 o'clock yesterday evening) I was having dinner with some friends.
- 2- (at 5 o'clock last Saturday) I was on a train on my way to London.
- 3- (at 10.15 yesterday morning)
- 4- (at 4.30 this morning)
- 5- (at 7.45 yesterday evening)
- 6- (half an hour ago)

Exercise2: Use your own ideas to complete these sentences. Use the past continuous.

- 1- Tom burnt his hand when he
- 2- The doorbell rang while I
- 3- We saw an accident while we
- 4- Mary feel asleep while she
- 5- The television was on but nobody.....

Exercise3: Put the verbs into the correct form, past continuous or past simple.

- 1- Jane *was waiting* (wait) for me when I *arrived* (arrive).
- 2- 'What (you/do) this time yesterday?' 'I was asleep.'
- 3- '.....(you/go) out last night ?' 'No, I was too tired.'
- 4- 'Was Carol at the party last night?' 'Yes, she (wear) a really nice dress.'
- 5- How fast (you/drive) when the accident (happen)?
- 6- John (take) a photograph of me while I (not/look).
- 7- We were in a difficult position. We (not/know) what to do.
- 8- I haven't seen Alan for ages. When I last(see) him, he
..... (try) to find a job in London.
- 9- I (walk) along the street when suddenly I
(hear) footsteps behind me. Somebody (follow) me. I was
frightened and I (start) to run.
- 10- When I was young, I (want) to be a bus driver.