

Past continuous: affirmative, negative and questions

Adapted from: Elementary Language Practice by Michael Vince

Explanations

We use the past continuous to describe a continuing situation in the past. We often interrupt a continuing situation with a sudden event.

6.30pm 7pm 7.30pm 8pm 8.30pm

having a bath phone rang

Now

Nadia phoned me at 7.30. I was having a bath. Last month I was working in Brazil.

Statements

I was sitting.

He was sitting.

We were sitting.

You were sitting.

She was sitting.

They were sitting.

It was sitting.

Negatives

The teacher was talking, but Harry wasn't listening.

was not = wasn't

were not = weren't

I wasn't sitting.

He wasn't sitting.

We weren't sitting.

You weren't sitting.

She wasn't sitting.

They weren't sitting.

It wasn't sitting.

Yes/No Questions

Were they working in the office?

Was I sitting?

Was he sitting?

Were we sitting?

Were you sitting?

Was she sitting?

Were they sitting?

Was it sitting?

Wh- questions

What were you doing at 6.00? Who was he talking to?

Examples

Steve was eating in the restaurant when the fire started. Carmen wasn't teaching in 1990, she was studying.

Were you eating dinner when I phoned?