

Past Tenses

Simple past – I worked, she worked, he didn't work, etc.

Past progressive (or 'past continuous') – I was working, they were working, he wasn't working, etc.

- We use the **simple past** for complete **finished actions**. We often use it **in stories**.
I wrote ten letters yesterday. A man walked into a police station and asked ...
- We use the **past progressive** to talk about actions which were **unfinished** at a past time.
What were you doing at 10.00 last night? I was writing a letter.

Simple past

A Complete the sentences with affirmative + verbs, questions ? or negatives –.

e.g.

She didn't feel well last night, but (OK this morning +) She felt OK this morning.

I bought a new coat yesterday. (shoes ?) Did you buy shoes?

- 1 I didn't learn much French at school, but (*a lot of Latin* +)
- 2 I remembered to buy the bread, but (*the milk* -)
- 3 I spoke to Ann's father, but (*her mother* -)
- 4 Peter didn't phone yesterday. (*this morning* ?)
- 5 I didn't take the bus to London; (*the train* +)
- 6 I know you went to Singapore, but (*Malaysia* ?)
- 7 The train stopped at Edinburgh, but (*Glasgow* -)
- 8 Did the children see a film? (two films +)
- 9 I ate your cake. (*my chocolates* ?)

B Make simple past questions.

e.g.

Ann and her brother went to Paris. Where did Ann and her brother go?

- 1 Sarah and her baby came out of hospital this morning. When
- 2 Peter's friends from the office gave him a bicycle. Why
- 3 The small woman with long hair said something. What
- 4 The children bought something. What ...
- 5 Somebody left a bicycle in the garden. Who
- 6 Something fell off the table. What
- 7 Bill found a cat in his office. Who

C Simple past or past progressive?

e.g.

I lived/was living in France for eight years.

Sue lived/was living in France when her uncle died.

- 1 At 6.15, when you phoned, I *had*/was *having* a shower.
- 2 We *watched*/were *watching* TV all evening.
- 3 Bill *watched*/was *watching* TV when Ann came in.
- 4 My father *worked*/was *working* hard all his life.
- 5 They got married while they *studied*/were *studying* at London University.
- 6 Yesterday we *drove*/ were *driving* from Oxford to Edinburgh and back.
- 7 It was a nice evening, so she *walked*/was *walking* home from work.