



A2 -

An embarrassing moment

Grammar focus: Past simple VS. past continuous

Warm-up discussion

1. Have you ever done something embarrassing in public?
2. What makes a moment embarrassing?
3. Have you ever laughed at yourself afterward?



Past simple VS. past continuous

Tense	Structure	Use	Example
Past simple	Subject + verb (past)	Completed action in the past.	<i>"I tripped on the stairs."</i>
Past continuous	Subject + was/were + verbING	Action in progress at a past time.	<i>"I was walking to the podium."</i>

Quick notes:

1. Past continuous (progressive) = longer/background action.
2. Past simple = short/completed action that may interrupt.

Example combo: *"I was giving a speech when I sneezed loudly."*



Oh No! Not the Banana Peel ...

Last week, I had to give a short talk at work. I was walking to the front when I stepped on a banana peel someone had left on the floor. I slipped, fell backward, and dropped all my notes. Everyone gasped, but then someone started clapping. Apparently, they thought it was part of the presentation! I was so embarrassed.



Comprehension questions

1. What was the speaker doing when the incident happened?
2. What caused the person to fall?
3. How did the audience react?
4. Was the speaker embarrassed or proud?



Positive, negative, and question forms

Past simple forms		
Positive	Subject + verb (past)	<i>She danced at the party.</i>
Negative	Subject + did not + base verb	<i>She didn't dance at the party.</i>
Question	Did + subject + base verb?	<i>Did she dance at the party?</i>
NOTE: Use base form after "did" (not the past form).		
Past continuous (progressive)		
Positive	Subject + was/were + verbING	<i>He was reading a book. / They were studying.</i>
Negative	Subject + wasn't/weren't + verbING	<i>He wasn't reading. / They weren't studying.</i>
Question	Was/Were + subject + verbING?	<i>Was he reading? / Were they studying?</i>
NOTE: "Was" = I, he, she, it / "Were" = you, we, they.		

Gap-fill activity

Instructions: Choose the correct form of the verb: past simple or past continuous.

1. I _____ (walk) into the room when everyone _____ (start) laughing.
2. She _____ (talk) on the phone when she _____ (drop) it in her soup.
3. We _____ (have) lunch when the fire alarm _____ (go) off.
4. He _____ (wear) his new suit when he _____ (spill) coffee on it.
5. I _____ (try) to open the door when the handle _____ (come) off in my hand.
6. They _____ (watch) a scary movie when the lights suddenly _____ (turn) off.



Common linking words for past simple + past continuous [1 of 2]

1. **When:** Used to show that a shorter action (past simple) interrupts a longer action (past continuous).
Example: *“I was walking down the street when I saw my old teacher.”*
2. **While:** Used to show that two actions were happening at the same time. One is usually longer (past continuous), but sometimes both can be.
Example: *“While I was studying, my brother was playing video games.”*
Example: *“I slipped while I was walking to the stage.”*
3. **As:** Similar to “while” but often used in more literary or descriptive contexts.
Example: *“As I was entering the room, everyone stood up.”*



Common linking words for past simple + past continuous [2 of 2]

1. **When** is typically followed by **past simple** when it introduced the interrupting action.
Example: *“I was dancing **when** the music stopped.”*
2. **While** is typically followed by **past continuous (progressive)**.
Example: *“He was talking loudly **while** she was trying to study.”*
3. **As** can be used like ‘**while**,’ but it often feels more formal or narrative.
Example: *“**As** they were leaving, it started to rain.”*



Reorder the sentence activity

Instructions: Rearrange the words to make grammatically correct sentences.

1. was / I / tripped / walking / I / when
2. phone / my / was / calling / I / dropped / it / I / while
3. laughed / everyone / fell / I / when
4. dancing / the / was / music / playing / was / while / she
5. cleaning / was / the / he / when / arrived / I / kitchen
6. wearing / were / costumes / they / arrived / when / we

Error correction activity

Instructions: Each sentence below contains one tense error. Correct it and explain why.

1. I was fall when I was giving my speech.
2. She dropped her bag while she walked to the bus stop.
3. We were are dinner when the light went out.
4. Was you wearing a costume when the fire alarm rang?





Thank you for your support.

YouTube: @elucidatedenglish