

## GRAMMAR 2: PAST SIMPLE AND PAST CONTINUOUS

### A. Look at the forms in *italics* in the text below. Decide which forms are Past Simple and which ones are Past Continuous.

Turing [1] **continued** working with machines and electronics and in 1944 he [2] **talked** about 'building a brain'. Turing [3] **had** an idea for an electronic 'universal machine' that could do any logical task. In 1948, while he [4] **was working** at Manchester University, he [5] **created** the 'Manchester Baby'. It [6] **was** Turing's second great invention and the world's first digital computer.

Past Simple: .....

Past Continuous: .....

### B. Fill in the gaps with *Past Simple* or *Past Continuous*.

- The ..... describes a completed past action
- The ..... describes an action that happened before AND after another action in the past

## Exercises

### A. Correct the mistakes in the sentences

- James met Sabine in 1998. He living in New York at the time.
- I wanted to work in marketing. So I was joining a marketing company.
- I were listening to the radio when you called.
- I saw Jess a minute ago. She talked to Sam.
- Why weren't you answer the phone when I called?

### B. Complete the sentences with the Past Simple or Past Continuous form of the verb in brackets

- While Diana ..... (watch) her favourite television programme, there ..... (be) a power cut.
- Who ..... (drive) the car at the time of the accident?
- I ..... (do) some shopping yesterday when I ..... (see) that Dutch friend of yours

4. What exactly ..... (you/do) when I ..... (come) into your office yesterday?
5. While I ..... (try) to get my car started, a man ..... (offer) to help me
6. Although it rained a lot, I ..... (enjoy) my holiday last year
7. I ..... (phone) you yesterday but you ..... (not answer). What ..... (you/do)?

**C. Below there is a short biography of Bill Gates. Complete the text using the verbs in the box either in the Past Simple or the Past Continuous.**

**be, be born, make, grow up, drop out, started (2), go, study, work, grow into, sell, meet**

Bill Gates story ..... in 1955. He ..... in Seattle, where he ..... with his parents and two sisters. His father ..... a lawyer and his mother a teacher. When he was thirteen, he ..... to become interested in computers and the development of computer software. In 1972 he ..... his first big profit of \$4,200 when he ..... timetable software to his school.

Bill Gates ..... to Harvard University and while he ..... there he started Microsoft. It was obvious that the new business was going to be a great success so, in 1976, he ..... after doing three years of a four-year course. Microsoft ..... an enormous international company that employs 54,000 people all over the world.

Gates ..... his wife, Melinda, in 1987 when she ..... for Microsoft. They got married in 1994 and now have two children.

**D. Look at the answers, based on the text in exercise D, and complete the questions.**

1. When ..... ?  
In 1955.

2. What ..... ?  
His father was a lawyer and his mother a teacher.

3. When ..... ?  
When he was thirteen.

4. When ..... ?  
In 1976

5. When ..... ?  
When she was working for Microsoft.

## Answers

### Grammar

#### Exercise A

Past Simple: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6

Past Continuous: 4

#### Exercise B

- a. Past Simple
- b. Past Continuous

### Exercises

#### Exercise A

1. was living
2. joined
3. was listening
4. she was talking
5. Why didn't you answer

#### Exercise B

1. was watching / was
2. was driving
3. was doing / saw
4. were you doing / came
5. was trying / offered
6. enjoyed
7. phoned / didn't answer / were you doing

#### Exercise C

1. started
2. was born
3. grew up
4. was
5. started
6. made
7. sold
8. went

9. was studying
10. dropped out
11. grew into
12. met
13. was working

Exercise D (suggested questions)

1. When was Bill Gates born? / When did Bill Gates's story start
2. What were his parents jobs? / What did his parents do for a living?
3. When did he become interested in computers?
4. When did he drop out of university?
5. When did he meet his wife?

## Grammar Reference

### Past Simple

- We use the Past Simple when we are talking about an event that happened at a **particular time in the past** and **finished**.

We **arrived** home before dark.

The film **started** at seven thirty.

- Phrases used often with Past Simple:

ago, yesterday, last year/month/week, the day before yesterday

### Form

<i>Positive statements</i>	<i>Negative statements</i>	<i>Wh- questions</i>
<b>Regular verbs</b> I / you / he / she / it / we / they <b>watched</b> <b>Irregular verbs</b> I / you etc. <b>went / ate / had</b> (See table: <i>Irregular verbs</i> )	I <b>did not (didn't) watch</b> / I <b>did not (didn't) go</b>	What <b>did you watch?</b> / Where <b>did you go?</b>
<i>Yes / No questions</i>	<i>Positive short answers</i>	<i>Negative short</i>
<b>Did</b> you <b>watch</b> it? <b>Did</b> you <b>go</b> home then?	Yes, <b>I did.</b>	No, <b>I didn't.</b>

\*Regular verbs: We add *-ed* to the infinitive or *-d* if the infinitive ends with an *-e*.  
 work + ed = *worked*, arrive + ed = *arrived*

\*\*Irregular verbs: Some verbs are irregular, e.g. buy → *bought*. See pages 6-7 for a list of irregular verbs.

### Past Continuous

- We use the Past Continuous when we are talking about something which happened **before** and **after** a specific **time in the past** OR **before** and **after** another **action** in the past.

It was just after ten. I **was watching** the news on TV.

He broke his leg when he **was playing** rugby.

- Phrases used often with the Past Continuous:

when, while, at + time

*I was working for a language school **when** I had the idea.*

*I had a job offer in Poland **while** I was working at Motorola.*

*I was typing the email **at four o'clock**.*

### Form

The past continuous is formed with the past tense of *be* and the *-ing* form of the verb.

<b>Positive statements</b>	<b>Negative statements</b>	<b>Wh- questions</b>
I / he / she / it <b>was working</b> you / we / they <b>were working</b>	I <b>was not (wasn't) working</b> / You <b>were not (weren't) working</b>	Where <b>was he working?</b> / Where <b>were they working?</b>
<b>Yes / No questions</b>	<b>Positive short answers</b>	<b>Negative short</b>
<b>Was</b> she <b>working?</b> <b>Were</b> you <b>working?</b>	Yes, <b>she was</b> . Yes, <b>we were</b> .	No, <b>she wasn't</b> . No, <b>we weren't</b> .

## Irregular verbs

<i>Verb</i>	<i>Past</i>	<i>Past participle</i>	<i>Present participle</i>	<i>Verb</i>	<i>Past</i>	<i>Past participle</i>	<i>Present participle</i>
be	was	been	being	fall	fell	fallen	falling
beat	beat	beat	beating	feed	fed	fed	feeding
become	became	become	becoming	feel	felt	felt	feeling
begin	began	begun	beginning	find	found	found	finding
bend	bent	bent	bending	fly	flew	flown	flying
bet	bet	bet	betting	forbid	forbade	forbide	forbiddin
bite	bit	bitten	biting	forget	forgot	forgotten	forgetting
blow	blew	blown	blowing	forgive	forgave	forgiven	forgiving
break	broke	broken	breaking	freeze	froze	frozen	freezing
bring	brought	brought	bringing	get	got	got	getting
broadcast	broadcast	broadcast	broadcasting	give	gave	given	giving
build	built	built	building	go	went	gone	going
burst	burst	burst	bursting	grow	grew	grown	growing
buy	bought	bought	buying	hang	hung	hung	hanging
catch	caught	caught	catching	have	had	had	having
choose	chose	chosen	choosing	hear	heard	heard	hearing
come	came	come	coming	hide	hid	hidden	hiding
cost	cost	cost	costing	hit	hit	hit	hitting
creep	crept	crept	creeping	hurt	hurt	hurt	hurting
cut	cut	cut	cutting	hold	held	held	holding
deal	dealt	dealt	dealing	keep	kept	kept	keeping
dig	dug	dug	digging	kneel	knelt	knelt	kneeling
do	did	done	doing	know	knew	known	knowing
draw	drew	drawn	drawing	lay	laid	laid	laying
drink	drank	drunk	drinking	lead	led	led	leading
drive	drove	driven	driving	leave	left	left	leaving
eat	ate	eaten	eating	lend	lent	lent	lending

<b>Verb</b>	<b>Past</b>	<b>Past participle</b>	<b>Present participle</b>	<b>Verb</b>	<b>Past</b>	<b>Past participle</b>	<b>Present participle</b>
let	let	let	letting	sleep	slept	slept	sleeping
lie	lay	lain	lying	slide	slid	slid	sliding
light	lit	lit	lighting	speak	spoke	spoken	speaking
lose	lost	lost	losing	spend	spent	spent	spending
make	made	made	making	split	split	split	splitting
mean	meant	meant	meaning	spit	spat	spat	spitting
meet	met	met	meeting	spread	spread	spread	spreading
pay	paid	paid	paying	spring	sprang	sprung	springing
put	put	put	putting	stand	stood	stood	standing
read/ri:d	read	read /red/	reading	steal	stole	stolen	stealing
/ride	/red/rode	ridden	riding	stick	stuck	stuck	sticking
ring	rang	rung	ringing	sting	stung	stung	stinging
rise	rose	risen	rising	stink	stank	stunk	stinking
run	ran	run	running	strike	struck	struck	striking
say	said	said	saying	swear	swore	sworn	swearing
see	saw	seen	seeing	sweep	swept	swept	sweeping
seek	sought	sought	seeking	swim	swam	swum	swimming
sell	sold	sold	selling	swing	swung	swung	swinging
send	sent	sent	sending	take	took	taken	taking
set	set	set	setting	teach	taught	taught	teaching
sew	sewed	sewn	sewing	tear	tore	torn	tearing
shake	shook	shook	shaking	tell	told	told	telling
shine	shone	shone	shining	think	thought	thought	thinking
shoot	shot	shot	shooting	throw-	threw	thrown	throwing
show	showed	shown/showed	showing	understand	understood	understood	understanding
shrink	shrank	shrunk	shrinking	wake	woke	woken	waking
shut	shut	shut	shutting	wear	wore	worn	wearing
sing	sang	sung	singing	weep	wept	wept	weeping
sink	sank	sunk	sinking	win	won	won	winning
sit	sat	sat	sitting	write	wrote	written	writing