

Past Continuous vs Past Simple – Test 1



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Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ Score: / 30

Choose the correct answer for each question. There is only one correct answer.

Part 1: Forms

Choose the correct form to complete each sentence.

1. At 8 o'clock last night, I _____ dinner.
A were cooking **B** was cooking **C** was cook **D** am cooking
2. They _____ football when it started to rain.
A was playing **B** were play **C** played were **D** were playing
3. She _____ TV at 10 p.m. She was asleep.
A wasn't watching **B** weren't watching **C** didn't watching **D** not was watching
4. _____ you sleeping when I called?
A Was **B** Did **C** Were **D** Are
5. What _____ Ali doing at 6 p.m. yesterday?
A were **B** was **C** did **D** does
6. We _____ the bus yesterday because it was late.
A didn't took **B** weren't take **C** didn't take **D** not took
7. _____ Maria call you last night?
A Was **B** Were **C** Does **D** Did
8. Choose the correct sentence.
A I was write an email when the phone rang.
B I writing an email when the phone was ringing.
C I was writing an email when the phone rang.
D I were writing an email when the phone rang.
9. The children were _____ in the sea.
A swimming **B** swimming **C** swimmming **D** swimeing
10. Leo _____ his keys on the way to work.
A losed **B** was lose **C** lost **D** loosed

Part 2: Past continuous or past simple?

Choose the best answer for the meaning of each sentence or dialogue.

11. I _____ a shower when the doorbell rang, so I couldn't open the door.
A had **B** was having **C** have **D** am having
12. While Sara was reading, her brother suddenly _____ the lights off.
A turned **B** was turning **C** turns **D** is turning

13. Yesterday I got up, _____ breakfast and went to school.
A was having **B** have **C** was had **D** had
14. When the teacher came in, the students _____ loudly, so she asked them to be quiet.
A talked **B** talk **C** were talking **D** was talking
15. At midnight, everybody in the house _____.
A is sleeping **B** were sleeping **C** sleeping **D** was sleeping
16. "Why didn't you answer my call?" "Sorry, I _____. "
A was driving **B** drove **C** am driving **D** drive
17. Last summer we _____ to Portugal for two weeks.
A were going **B** went **C** was going **D** go
18. I _____ my leg while I was skiing.
A broke **B** was breaking **C** break **D** were breaking
19. "What were you doing when the lights went out?" "I _____ my homework."
A did **B** do **C** were doing **D** was doing
20. Choose the correct sentence.
A While we were wait for the train, it started to snow.
B While we were waiting for the train, it started to snow.
C While we were waiting for the train, it was start to snow.
D While we waiting for the train, it started to snow.

Part 3: Reading – A strange evening

Read the story. Choose the correct word or words for each gap.

Last Saturday evening, Nadia (1) ___ a film at home. Her parents were out, and her little brother, Omar, (2) ___ computer games in his room.

At about nine o'clock, she (3) ___ a strange noise in the kitchen. She (4) ___ the TV off and walked slowly to the kitchen door.

When she opened it, she saw the cat. It (5) ___ on the table and eating Omar's pizza! Nadia laughed. "You naughty cat!" she said. Then she (6) ___ a photo and sent it to her parents.

21. Gap (1): Last Saturday evening, Nadia _____ a film at home.
A watched was **B** were watching **C** was watching **D** watching
22. Gap (2): ... her little brother, Omar, _____ computer games in his room.
A were playing **B** was playing **C** plays **D** is playing
23. Gap (3): At about nine o'clock, she _____ a strange noise in the kitchen.
A was hearing **B** was heard **C** hears **D** heard
24. Gap (4): She _____ the TV off and walked slowly to the kitchen door.
A turned **B** was turning **C** turns **D** turn
25. Gap (5): It _____ on the table and eating Omar's pizza!
A sat **B** were sitting **C** was sitting **D** is sitting
26. Gap (6): Then she _____ a photo and sent it to her parents.
A was taking **B** took **C** takes **D** were taking

Part 4: Errors and questions

Find the mistake or choose the correct sentence.

27. Which part of the sentence is wrong? "Yesterday I was walk in the park when I saw a beautiful bird."
A was walk **B** when **C** saw **D** a beautiful bird
28. Which part of the sentence is wrong? "Where did you went when the party finished?"
A Where **B** did **C** went **D** finished
29. Choose the correct question for this answer: "I was talking to my cousin."
A Who did you talking to? **B** Who you were talking to?
C Who was you talking to? **D** Who were you talking to?
30. Choose the correct negative of: "Emma was working at 7 p.m."
A Emma didn't working at 7 p.m. **B** Emma wasn't working at 7 p.m.
C Emma not was working at 7 p.m. **D** Emma weren't working at 7 p.m.

Answer key – Past Continuous vs Past Simple – Test 1

1 B	2 D	3 A	4 C	5 B	6 C	7 D	8 C	9 B	10 C
11 B	12 A	13 D	14 C	15 D	16 A	17 B	18 A	19 D	20 B
21 C	22 B	23 D	24 A	25 C	26 B	27 A	28 C	29 D	30 B

Explanations

- B** – With I we use was + -ing for an action in progress at a past time.
- D** – With they we use were + -ing.
- A** – The negative of the past continuous with she is wasn't + -ing.
- C** – Questions in the past continuous with you start with Were.
- B** – Ali is singular, so we use was + subject + -ing.
- C** – The past simple negative is didn't + base form of the verb.
- D** – Past simple questions use Did + subject + base form.
- C** – The correct form is I was + -ing, and the short action (rang) is past simple.
- B** – Swim ends in one vowel + one consonant, so we double the m: swimming.
- C** – Lose is irregular; its past simple form is lost.
- B** – The shower was a longer action in progress when the short action (the bell) happened.
- A** – Turning off the lights is a short, sudden action, so we use the past simple.
- D** – For a list of finished actions one after another, we use the past simple.
- C** – The talking was already in progress when the teacher came in, and students is plural.
- D** – Everybody takes a singular verb, so we use was sleeping for an action in progress at midnight.
- A** – Driving was in progress at the moment of the call, so we use the past continuous.
- B** – A finished trip in the past is described with the past simple.
- A** – Breaking a leg is a short action that happened during the longer action of skiing.
- D** – The answer matches the question: an action in progress, with I + was + -ing.
- B** – While + past continuous for the longer action, past simple (started) for the new event.
- C** – This is the background action in progress, and Nadia takes was.
- B** – Another background action in the past; Omar is singular, so was playing.
- D** – Hearing the noise is a short event that interrupts the film, so we use the past simple.
- A** – These are finished actions in a sequence, so both verbs are past simple.
- C** – The cat's actions were in progress when Nadia opened the door, and 'and eating' needs was + -ing.
- B** – Take is irregular; took is a finished action in the sequence with sent.
- A** – The past continuous needs the -ing form: was walking.
- C** – After did we use the base form: Where did you go?
- D** – The question form is question word + were + you + -ing.
- B** – The negative of was working with a singular subject is wasn't working.

Notes for teachers: Use this test after introducing the past continuous alongside the past simple, or as a review. It targets typical A2 errors such as was/were agreement, missing -ing, 'did' + -ing, and wrong irregular past forms. It also tests choosing the past continuous for a longer background action and the past simple for a short action that interrupts it. For follow-up, ask students to write five sentences about what they were doing at different times yesterday and what happened.