

Past Continuous vs Past Simple – Test 2



Take this test online
and check your
answers instantly

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

Choose the correct answer for each question. Only one answer is correct.

Part 1: Form

Choose the correct form to complete each sentence or question.

1. My parents _____ in the kitchen when I got home.
☐ A was dancing ☐ B dancing ☐ C were dancing ☐ D were danceing
2. We were _____ photos of the old castle when the guide called us.
☐ A takeing ☐ B taking ☐ C takking ☐ D took
3. Lucy _____ attention, so she didn't hear the question.
☐ A didn't paying ☐ B weren't paying ☐ C wasn't pay ☐ D wasn't paying
4. Daniel _____ the email because he was too busy.
☐ A didn't read ☐ B didn't readed ☐ C wasn't read ☐ D not read
5. _____ the twins wearing their new jackets at the party?
☐ A Did ☐ B Was ☐ C Were ☐ D Do
6. What time _____ the film start last night?
☐ A was ☐ B did ☐ C were ☐ D has
7. Hana _____ her bike to the beach on Sunday.
☐ A rided ☐ B was ride ☐ C ridden ☐ D rode
8. "Were you working at the café last weekend?" "Yes, I _____."
☐ A was ☐ B were ☐ C did ☐ D am
9. "Did your sister enjoy the concert?" "No, she _____."
☐ A wasn't ☐ B didn't ☐ C doesn't ☐ D weren't
10. Choose the correct question.
☐ A Where you were going this morning? ☐ B Where did you going this morning?
☐ C Where were you going this morning? ☐ D Where was you going this morning?

Part 2: Meaning and use

Choose the answer that best fits the meaning of each sentence or situation.

11. I _____ my old teacher while I was shopping in town.
☐ A was meeting ☐ B meet ☐ C met ☐ D were meeting
12. While my dad _____ the car, it started to snow.
☐ A was washing ☐ B washing ☐ C were washing ☐ D washes

13. "When the phone rang, I answered it." What does this mean?
A The phone rang while I was answering it.
B I answered the phone after it rang.
C I was answering the phone before it rang.
D I answered the phone many times.
14. "When the phone rang, I was having a bath." What does this mean?
A I had a bath after the phone rang. **B** The phone rang after I finished my bath.
C I started my bath before the phone rang. **D** I had a bath because the phone rang.
15. Which sentence describes actions that happened one after another?
A She was cooking while he was setting the table.
B She was cooking dinner when her friend called.
C At six o'clock she was cooking dinner.
D She cooked dinner, ate it and washed the plates.
16. It was a beautiful morning. The sun _____ and the birds were singing.
A were shining **B** is shining **C** was shining **D** shining
17. I _____ the answer, so I put up my hand.
A was knowing **B** knew **C** were knowing **D** know
18. "Why were you so late this morning?" "Sorry, my alarm clock _____."
A didn't ring **B** wasn't ring **C** didn't rang **D** not rang
19. "What happened when you were walking home?" Choose the best answer.
A I was finding some money on the street. **B** I find some money on the street.
C I found some money on the street. **D** I was find some money on the street.
20. Choose the correct sentence.
A While I walked to school, I was seeing an accident.
B When I was walking to school, I was see an accident.
C While I was walk to school, I saw an accident.
D While I was walking to school, I saw an accident.

Part 3: Reading – A wet morning

Read the story and choose the correct option for each gap.

Last Tuesday, Kofi had a very strange morning. When he left his flat at eight o'clock, it (1) ___ heavily, so he opened his umbrella and walked to the bus stop. He (2) ___ for the bus when a small, wet dog ran up to him and sat at his feet.

The dog looked tired and hungry. It (3) ___ a blue collar with a phone number on it. Kofi (4) ___ the number, and a young woman answered. "That's my dog, Biscuit!" she said. "I'm coming!" Ten minutes later, she (5) ___ in a taxi and gave Kofi a big hug.

Of course, Kofi missed his bus. When he finally got to the office, his boss (6) ___ for him at the door. "Sorry I'm late," Kofi said with a smile. "I can explain!"

21. Gap (1): When he left his flat at eight o'clock, it _____ heavily.
A were raining **B** was raining **C** is raining **D** rains
22. Gap (2): He _____ for the bus when a small, wet dog ran up to him.
A waited **B** were waiting **C** was waiting **D** waits

23. Gap (3): It _____ a blue collar with a phone number on it.
A had **B** was having **C** has **D** were having
24. Gap (4): Kofi _____ the number, and a young woman answered.
A was calling **B** calls **C** were calling **D** called
25. Gap (5): Ten minutes later, she _____ in a taxi and gave Kofi a big hug.
A arrives **B** arrived **C** was arriving **D** were arriving
26. Gap (6): When he finally got to the office, his boss _____ for him at the door.
A was waiting **B** waited **C** were waiting **D** waits

Part 4: Find the mistake

Find the part or the sentence that contains a mistake.

27. Find the mistake: "Ines were talking on the phone when her bus came."
A Ines were **B** talking **C** when her bus **D** came
28. Find the mistake: "I was understanding the lesson, so I didn't ask any questions."
A the lesson **B** so I
C I was understanding **D** didn't ask
29. Which sentence has a mistake?
A Were they sleeping when you got home?
B Mia wasn't listening, so she missed the instructions.
C When did the concert finish?
D The boys was playing in the garden at 5 p.m.
30. Which sentence has a mistake?
A While I was cooking, my friend phoned me.
B Suddenly, a cat was jumping onto the table.
C We were walking home when it started to snow.
D What were you doing at lunchtime?

Answer key – Past Continuous vs Past Simple – Test 2

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

Explanations

- C** – Plural subject 'my parents' needs 'were' + -ing, and 'dance' drops the final -e: dancing.
- B** – Verbs ending in -e drop the -e before -ing: take → taking.
- D** – The past continuous negative is 'wasn't' + -ing for he/she/it.
- A** – The past simple negative is 'didn't' + base form of the verb.
- C** – Past continuous questions use 'were' with plural subjects + -ing.
- B** – Past simple questions use 'did' + base form: did ... start.
- D** – 'Ride' is irregular; its past simple form is 'rode'.
- A** – The short answer repeats the auxiliary in the correct form: Yes, I was.
- B** – A question with 'did' gets a short answer with 'did/didn't'.
- C** – Question order is question word + were + subject + -ing.
- C** – Meeting the teacher was a short, complete action that happened during the longer action, so we use the past simple.
- A** – 'While' introduces the longer action in progress, so we use 'was' + -ing.
- B** – Two past simple verbs with 'when' show one action after the other.
- C** – The past continuous shows the bath was already in progress when the phone rang.
- D** – A list of past simple verbs shows actions in order, one after another.
- C** – We use the past continuous to describe the background scene; 'the sun' is singular, so 'was shining'.
- B** – 'Know' is a state verb, so we don't use it in the continuous form.
- A** – The past simple negative is 'didn't' + base form: didn't ring.
- C** – 'What happened?' asks about a single, complete event, so we use the past simple.
- D** – The longer action uses the past continuous and the short interrupting action uses the past simple.
- B** – The rain was already in progress when he left, and 'it' takes 'was'.
- C** – Waiting was the longer action that was interrupted by the dog, so we use the past continuous.
- A** – 'Have' meaning possession is a state verb, so we use the past simple 'had'.
- D** – This is a complete action in a sequence of events, so we use the past simple.
- B** – Arriving and hugging are completed actions one after another, so we use the past simple.
- A** – The boss was already waiting when Kofi arrived, so we use 'was' + -ing.
- A** – 'Ines' is singular, so it should be 'Ines was talking'.
- C** – 'Understand' is a state verb, so it should be 'I understood'.
- D** – 'The boys' is plural, so it should be 'were playing'.
- B** – A sudden, short action needs the past simple: 'Suddenly, a cat jumped onto the table.'

Notes for teachers: Use this test after presenting both tenses, or as a review. It targets typical A2 errors: wrong agreement (was/were), mixing did with past forms, -ing spelling, using the past continuous with stative verbs or sudden single actions, and confusing the order of actions with when. As follow-up, ask students to write a short story about an unexpected event using at least three when/while sentences.