



Past Continuous: Background Description in Narratives

Fill in the blank with the correct option.

1. It was a beautiful evening. The sun ____ (set) and the sky was turning orange.
a) set
b) were setting
c) sets
d) was setting
2. The streets were empty. Only a few cars ____ (pass) by occasionally.
a) passed
b) pass
c) were passing
d) was passing
3. It was midnight. The wind ____ (howl) outside and rain was hitting the windows.
a) howl
b) were howling
c) was howling
d) howled
4. In the park, children ____ (play), dogs were running, and people were enjoying the sunshine.
a) played
b) was playing
c) were playing
d) play
5. The café was busy. Customers ____ (chat) and waiters were rushing between tables.
a) were chatting
b) chatted
c) chat
d) was chatting
6. It was a cold winter night. Snow ____ (fall) gently and everything was white.
a) were falling
b) fall
c) fell
d) was falling
7. The train station was crowded. People ____ (wait) on the platform and announcements were echoing.
a) wait
b) waited
c) was waiting
d) were waiting
8. In the office, phones ____ (ring) constantly and everyone was typing on their computers.
a) ring
b) were ringing
c) was ringing
d) rang
9. The birds ____ (sing) in the trees and a gentle breeze was blowing through the garden.
a) were singing
b) sing
c) was singing
d) sang
10. At the party, music ____ (play), people were dancing, and laughter filled the room.
a) played
b) were playing
c) play
d) was playing
11. The old house stood on the hill. Shadows ____ (move) behind the curtains.
a) move
b) were moving
c) moved
d) was moving

12. It was early morning. The city ____ (wake) up and shops were opening their doors.
a) woke
b) was waking
c) wake
d) were waking
13. In the forest, animals ____ (sleep) and an owl was hooting in the darkness.
a) were sleeping
b) slept
c) was sleeping
d) sleep
14. The beach was quiet. Waves ____ (crash) gently on the shore and seagulls were flying overhead.
a) was crashing
b) crash
c) crashed
d) were crashing
15. Inside the library, students ____ (study) quietly and the librarian was arranging books.
a) were studying
b) study
c) was studying
d) studied
16. The market was lively. Vendors ____ (shout) prices and customers were bargaining.
a) shouted
b) was shouting
c) shout
d) were shouting
17. It was getting dark. Street lights ____ (flicker) on and people were heading home.
a) flickered
b) was flickering
c) were flickering
d) flicker
18. The stadium was packed. Fans ____ (cheer) and the tension was building.
a) cheer
b) were cheering
c) cheered
d) was cheering
19. In the kitchen, my grandmother ____ (bake) cookies and a delicious smell was filling the house.
a) bake
b) was baking
c) were baking
d) baked
20. The theatre was full. The lights ____ (dim) and the audience was waiting for the show to start.
a) were dimming
b) dimmed
c) was dimming
d) dim



Answers

1. d) was setting
2. c) were passing
3. c) was howling
4. c) were playing
5. a) were chatting
6. d) was falling
7. d) were waiting
8. b) were ringing
9. a) were singing
10. d) was playing
11. b) were moving
12. b) was waking
13. a) were sleeping
14. d) were crashing
15. a) were studying
16. d) were shouting
17. c) were flickering
18. b) were cheering
19. b) was baking
20. a) were dimming



Explanations

1. “was setting” (d)

Use Past Continuous to describe the background scene. 'The sun was setting' creates atmosphere.

2. “were passing” (c)

Use Past Continuous to describe ongoing background activity in the scene.

3. “was howling” (c)

Use Past Continuous to set a dramatic atmosphere for a story.

4. “were playing” (c)

Multiple Past Continuous verbs create a vivid scene with many activities happening.

5. “were chatting” (a)

Past Continuous describes the busy atmosphere of the café.

6. “was falling” (d)

Use Past Continuous to paint a picture of the winter scene.

7. “were waiting” (d)

Describes the scene before the main event of the story.

8. “were ringing” (b)

Multiple Past Continuous verbs create a busy office atmosphere.

9. “were singing” (a)

Use Past Continuous to describe a peaceful garden scene.

10. “was playing” (d)

Describes the lively atmosphere of the party before something happened.

11. “were moving” (b)

Past Continuous creates a mysterious, suspenseful atmosphere.

12. “was waking” (b)

Describes the gradual process of the city coming to life.

13. “were sleeping” (a)

Sets the scene for a forest at night.

14. “were crashing” (d)

Creates a peaceful beach scene with ongoing natural activities.

15. “were studying” (a)

Describes the quiet atmosphere inside the library.

16. “were shouting” (d)

Creates a busy, noisy market atmosphere.

17. “were flickering” (c)

Describes the transition from day to night.

18. “were cheering” (b)

Sets the exciting atmosphere before the main sporting event.

19. “was baking” (b)

Creates a warm, cozy home atmosphere.

20. “were dimming” (a)

Describes the anticipation and atmosphere before a performance.