



Past Continuous:

Past Simple vs Past Continuous: Mixed Practice

Fill in the blank with the correct option.

- I ____ (meet) Sarah while I was shopping yesterday.
a) were meeting
b) was meeting
c) met
d) meet
- At 7 pm yesterday, we ____ (have) dinner with our grandparents.
a) had
b) was having
c) have
d) were having
- She ____ (not/hear) the doorbell because she was listening to loud music.
a) wasn't hearing
b) don't hear
c) didn't hear
d) weren't hearing
- While Tom ____ (work), his colleagues were chatting in the break room.
a) work
b) were working
c) was working
d) worked
- The accident ____ (happen) while they were driving to the airport.
a) were happening
b) was happening
c) happen
d) happened
- What ____ (you/do) when I called you last night?
a) was you doing
b) you were doing
c) did you do
d) were you doing
- I ____ (see) a famous actor while I was walking in the city centre.
a) see
b) was seeing
c) were seeing
d) saw
- The children ____ (play) in the garden when it started to rain.
a) played
b) was playing
c) were playing
d) play
- Yesterday, I ____ (go) to the gym and then I visited my friend.
a) went
b) were going
c) go
d) was going
- While she ____ (cook), he was washing the dishes.
a) was cooking
b) cook
c) cooked
d) were cooking
- I ____ (not/sleep) well last night because my neighbours were having a party.
a) weren't sleeping
b) wasn't sleeping
c) didn't sleep
d) don't sleep

12. He ____ (break) his leg while he was skiing.
a) was breaking
b) break
c) were breaking
d) broke
13. At this time last week, I ____ (lie) on a beach in Spain.
a) was lying
b) lay
c) were lying
d) lie
14. When I ____ (arrive), everyone was already eating.
a) arrived
b) arrive
c) was arriving
d) were arriving
15. She ____ (read) a book all afternoon yesterday.
a) read
b) was reading
c) reads
d) were reading
16. I ____ (finish) my homework and then I watched TV.
a) finished
b) finish
c) was finishing
d) were finishing
17. What ____ (happen) while I was away?
a) happened
b) happen
c) were happening
d) happening
18. The sun ____ (shine) and birds were singing. It was a perfect day.
a) were shining
b) was shining
c) shine
d) shone
19. I ____ (not/know) you were here! When did you arrive?
a) didn't know
b) weren't knowing
c) wasn't knowing
d) don't know
20. The phone ____ (ring) three times while I was taking a shower, so I missed the calls.
a) ring
b) rang
c) were ringing
d) ringing



Answers

1. c) met
2. d) were having
3. c) didn't hear
4. c) was working
5. d) happened
6. d) were you doing
7. d) saw
8. c) were playing
9. a) went
10. a) was cooking
11. c) didn't sleep
12. d) broke
13. a) was lying
14. a) arrived
15. b) was reading
16. a) finished
17. a) happened
18. b) was shining
19. a) didn't know
20. b) rang



Explanations

1. “met” (c)

Use Past Simple for a short, sudden action (meeting) that happened during a longer action (shopping).

2. “were having” (d)

Use Past Continuous for an action in progress at a specific time (at 7 pm).

3. “didn't hear” (c)

Use Past Simple for a completed action. 'Hear' is also a stative verb that's rarely used in continuous form.

4. “was working” (c)

Use Past Continuous for parallel actions. Both working and chatting were happening at the same time.

5. “happened” (d)

Use Past Simple for a sudden, completed event that occurred during a longer action.

6. “were you doing” (d)

Use Past Continuous to ask about an action in progress at the time of the call.

7. “saw” (d)

Use Past Simple for a short, completed action. 'See' is also rarely used in continuous form.

8. “were playing” (c)

Use Past Continuous for the longer action that was interrupted by the rain.

9. “went” (a)

Use Past Simple for a sequence of completed actions (went, then visited).

10. “was cooking” (a)

Use Past Continuous for both parallel actions happening at the same time.

11. “didn't sleep” (c)

Use Past Simple for the result or completed state: not sleeping well (overall).

12. “broke” (d)

Use Past Simple for a sudden, completed action that happened during skiing.

13. “was lying” (a)

Use Past Continuous for an action in progress at a specific past time.

14. “arrived” (a)

Use Past Simple for the short action. 'When I arrived' is the moment of interruption.

15. “was reading” (b)

Use Past Continuous for an action that continued throughout a period (all afternoon).

16. “finished” (a)

Use Past Simple for completed actions in sequence: first finished, then watched.

17. “happened” (a)

Use Past Simple to ask about completed events during your absence.

18. “was shining” (b)

Use Past Continuous to describe the background scene or atmosphere.

19. “didn't know” (a)

Use Past Simple with 'know' (stative verb). Stative verbs are rarely used in continuous.

20. “rang” (b)

Use Past Simple 'rang' for completed, countable events (three times).