CHAPTER 2

The Past

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The Simple Past
They traveled by ship.

The Past Continuous
They were traveling by ship.

The Simple Past and The Past Continuous in Time Clauses
Before the noise interrupted them, they were playing cards.

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The Past Continuous for In-Progress Past Situations

Completed vs. In-Progress Past Situations

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A Night to Remember

A1 Before You Read

Discuss these questions.

What are some important news events from your lifetime? Do you remember where you were when they occurred? What were you doing at that particular time?

A2 Read

Read this book excerpt to find out what was happening when the Titanic hit an iceberg.

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

It was April 14, 1912, the fifth night of the Titanic's first trip. At almost 11:40 p.m., Frederick Fleet and Reginald Lee, two of the ship's "lookouts," were on duty.

They were watching for icebergs when Fleet suddenly saw something directly ahead. At first it was small, but every second it grew larger and closer. Quickly, Fleet banged the bell three times to warn of danger ahead. He also lifted the phone and rang the bridge.

"What did you see?" asked a calm voice at the other end.

"Iceberg right ahead," replied Fleet.

"Thank you," said the voice calmly.

At this moment George Thomas Rowe, one of the ship's officers, was standing watch. Suddenly, he felt a curious motion break the steady rhythm of the engines. He glanced forward—and stared again. He thought he saw a ship before he realized it was an iceberg. The next instant it was gone.

Meanwhile, down below in the first class dining room, four other members of the Titanic's crew were sitting around one of the tables. They were doing what off-duty stewards often did—they were gossiping about the passengers. Then, while they were talking, a grinding vibration seemed to come from deep inside the ship. It was not much, but it was enough to break their conversation and rattle the silver that was on the breakfast tables for the next morning.

In the kitchen, Chief Night Baker Walter Belford was making rolls for the following day. When the jolt came, it impressed Belford strongly. Perhaps this was because a pan of fresh rolls clattered off the top of the oven and scattered about the floor.
Most of the Titanic’s passengers were in bed when the strange vibration occurred. But a few were still up. As usual, they were in the first class smoking room. Around one table, some men were enjoying a final cigar. At another table, the ship’s younger passengers were enjoying a lively game of bridge. While they were playing and laughing, they suddenly felt that grinding vibration. Some people ran out onto the deck. When they got there, they saw the iceberg. It was scraping the side of the ship. In another moment it faded into the darkness. The excitement, too, soon disappeared. The group went back inside, and the bridge game continued.

Down in Boiler Room No. 6, Fireman Fred Barrett was talking to an assistant engineer when the warning bell rang. A quick shout of warning—an ear-splitting crash—and the whole side of the ship seemed to collapse. The sea rushed in and swirled around the pipes and valves. Before the watertight door slammed down, the two men leaped through the doorway into Boiler Room No. 5. Unfortunately, they found things almost as bad there...

Adapted from A Night to Remember

| **clatter** | to make a series of knocking noises |
| **grinding** | rubbing together harshly |
| **jolt** | a sudden forceful shake |
| **stand watch** | to be on duty on a ship |
| **steward** | a man who helps passengers and serves meals |
| **vibration** | a shaking movement |

### A3 After You Read

Choose the answer that best completes each sentence.

1. Crew members were watching for _____.
   a. seagulls  
   b. rain  
   c. icebergs

2. The dining room stewards were _____.
   a. cleaning up  
   b. sleeping  
   c. talking

3. The baker was making _____.
   a. pies  
   b. rolls  
   c. cakes

4. ____ of the passengers were in bed.
   a. All  
   b. Most  
   c. None

5. Some of the passengers _____.
   a. saw the iceberg  
   b. warned the captain  
   c. were worried

6. Water poured into ____ first.
   a. the kitchen  
   b. the boiler rooms  
   c. the captain’s quarters
The Simple Past, the Past Continuous, and Time Clauses

Think Critically About Form

A. Look back at the book excerpt on page 28 and complete the tasks below.

1. **IDENTIFY** Two examples of the simple past are underlined. Find three regular and three irregular simple past verb forms.

2. **RECOGNIZE** An example of the past continuous is circled. Find six more examples. Sort your examples into singular and plural.

3. **ANALYZE** Find examples of clauses beginning with *when*, *while*, and *before*. Do these clauses come before or after the main clause they are connected to?

B. Discuss your answers with the class and read the Form charts to check them.

### The Simple Past

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AFFIRMATIVE STATEMENTS</th>
<th>NEGATIVE STATEMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBJECT</strong></td>
<td><strong>VERB + -ED OR IRREGULAR FORM</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>worked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He</td>
<td>felt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They</td>
<td>traveled</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Past Continuous

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AFFIRMATIVE STATEMENTS</th>
<th>NEGATIVE STATEMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBJECT</strong></td>
<td><strong>WAS/WERE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He</td>
<td>was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They</td>
<td>were</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### The Simple Past

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES/NO QUESTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DID</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did</td>
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</table>

#### Short Answers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AFFIRMATIVE</th>
<th>NEGATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes,</strong></td>
<td><strong>I</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td><strong>did.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No,</strong></td>
<td><strong>I</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td><strong>didn't.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### INFORMATION QUESTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>WH-WORD</strong></th>
<th><strong>DID</strong></th>
<th><strong>SUBJECT</strong></th>
<th><strong>VERB</strong></th>
<th><strong>VERB + -ED OR IRREGULAR FORM</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When</td>
<td>you</td>
<td><strong>work</strong></td>
<td>there?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why</td>
<td>he</td>
<td><strong>feel</strong></td>
<td>scared?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where</td>
<td>they</td>
<td><strong>travel</strong></td>
<td>to?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Past Continuous

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES/NO QUESTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WAS/WERE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Were</td>
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<tr>
<td>Was</td>
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<td>Were</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Short Answers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AFFIRMATIVE</th>
<th>NEGATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes,</strong></td>
<td><strong>I</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>was</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No,</strong></td>
<td><strong>I</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wasn't</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### INFORMATION QUESTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>WH-WORD</strong></th>
<th><strong>WAS/WERE</strong></th>
<th><strong>SUBJECT</strong></th>
<th><strong>VERB + -ING</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When</td>
<td>were</td>
<td>you</td>
<td><strong>working</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why</td>
<td>was</td>
<td>he</td>
<td><strong>feeling</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where</td>
<td>were</td>
<td>they</td>
<td><strong>traveling</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>that night?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>scared?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>by ship?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Simple Past

- See Appendices 4 and 5 for spelling and pronunciation rules for verbs ending in *-ed*.
- See Appendix 6 for irregular verbs and their simple past forms and Appendix 14 for contractions with *did*.

### The Past Continuous

- Stative verbs are not usually used in the past continuous. Use the simple past instead.
  
  *I owned a house.*  
  *X I was owning a house.*  
  **(Incorrect)**

- See Appendix 3 for spelling rules for verbs ending in *-ing* and Appendix 14 for contractions with *was/were*.

(Continued on page 32)
The Simple Past and The Past Continuous in Time Clauses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME CLAUSE</th>
<th>MAIN CLAUSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>While the crew <strong>was</strong> working.</td>
<td>the passengers <strong>were</strong> sleeping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before the noise <strong>interrupted</strong> them,</td>
<td>they <strong>were</strong> playing cards.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAIN CLAUSE</th>
<th>TIME CLAUSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The passengers <strong>were</strong> sleeping</td>
<td>while the crew was <strong>working</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water <strong>flooded</strong> the ship</td>
<td><strong>after</strong> it <strong>struck</strong> the iceberg.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Time clauses begin with time words such as *while, when, before, or after*. They are dependent clauses and cannot stand alone as complete sentences. They must be attached to independent main clauses to complete their meaning.
- A time clause can come before or after the main clause. The meaning is the same. If the time clause comes first, it is followed by a comma.

**B1 Listening for Form**

Listen to this news report and write the verb forms you hear.

Where **were** you when the lights **went** out this morning? That’s the question everyone is asking today. Early this morning, a construction crew **was** on 33rd Street while people across the city **went** to work. At 8:29 A.M., a simple mistake by the construction crew **caused** a blackout that **cut** power to almost a million people.

The blackout **forced** airports to send incoming flights elsewhere. But according to one report, a jet liner **hit** just when the power in the control tower **failed**. After the jet **lost** contact with the tower, the pilot **directed** the plane himself with no problems.

The mayor **declared** a state of emergency. Fortunately, no major accidents or injuries **occurred**, and the power **restored** after six hours and twenty minutes, at 2:49 this afternoon.
B2 Building Simple Past and Past Continuous Sentences
Build as many meaningful sentences as possible. Use an item from each column, or from the second and third columns only. Punctuate your sentences correctly.

When did you buy a computer?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>when did</th>
<th>who</th>
<th>paid cash</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>what did</td>
<td>what</td>
<td>studying this morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>did</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>buy a computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what were</td>
<td></td>
<td>happened last night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>did</td>
<td></td>
<td>do when the bell rang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>go online yesterday</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B3 Identifying Dependent and Independent Clauses
Check (✓) the examples that can stand alone as full sentences. Correct the punctuation of those sentences.

1. He was standing on the deck of the Titanic.  ✓
2. while the stewards were talking
3. something vibrated inside the ship
4. before midnight
5. the iceberg hit the ship
6. some passengers were getting ready for bed
7. after the incident
8. a group was still playing bridge
9. while others were wandering about
10. after the men escaped
**B4 Combining Sentences with Time Clauses**

Work with a partner. Combine the sentences with the time word in parentheses to form as many sentences with time clauses as possible.

1. I went home. I finished my work. (when)
   
   *When I went home, I finished my work.* OR *I finished my work when I went home.*
   *When I finished my work, I went home.* OR *I went home when I finished my work.*

2. He was reading. He was listening to music. (while)

3. He went to law school. He studied hard. (after)

4. She fell asleep. The doorbell rang. (before)

5. The fire started. We were sleeping. (when)

6. The TV show started. They went to bed. (before)

7. The phone was ringing. They were cooking dinner. (while)

8. The package arrived. She called the post office. (before)

**B5 Asking and Answering Questions with Time Clauses**

Work with a partner. Take turns asking and answering the questions.

1. What were you doing...
   before this class started?
   when the teacher walked in?
   when the class ended yesterday?
   while you were eating breakfast?
   
   *A: What were you doing before this class started?*  
   *B: I was talking to my friends.*

2. Where were you living...
   when you were a child?
   while you were in high school?
   before you came to this town/city?

3. What were you thinking about...
   when you went to sleep last night?
   when you woke up this morning?
   while you were coming to class?
   before you walked in the door?
Contrasting the Simple Past and the Past Continuous

Think Critically About Meaning and Use

A. Read the sentences and answer the questions below.
   1a. The warning bell rang.  
   1b. The warning bell was ringing.  
   2a. The bakers cleaned up.  
   2b. The bakers were cleaning up.

**ANALYZE** Which sentences describe a completed event? an unfinished event?

B. Discuss your answers with the class and read the Meaning and Use Notes to check them.

Meaning and Use Notes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Simple Past for Completed Past Situations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong> The simple past describes an action or state that started and finished at a definite time in the past. The action or state can last for a short or long period of time, occur in the recent or distant past, and happen once or repeatedly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Short Period of Time</strong> The rain lasted for 30 seconds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recent Past</strong> She was very sick last week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Happened Once</strong> She arrived late last week.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Past Continuous for In-Progress Past Situations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2A</strong> The past continuous expresses an activity in progress at an exact moment in the past. The activity began before the specific point in time and might also have continued after that time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities in Progress at an Exact Moment</strong> He was getting ready for bed at 11:40 P.M. He still wasn’t ready ten minutes later.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued on page 36)
The past continuous may also express an activity in progress over an extended period of time in the past. The activity may have been ongoing or may have stopped and started repeatedly.

**Activities in Progress over an Extended Period of Time**

They were working on the project for two years.

---

### Completed vs. In-Progress Past Situations

**3A** The past continuous and the simple past can be similar in meaning, but not exactly the same. To describe a situation as completed, choose the simple past. To describe the same situation in progress, choose the past continuous.

**Simple Past (Completed)**  
I lived on Eddy Street in 1986.

**Past Continuous (In Progress)**  
I was living on Eddy Street while I was in school.

---

**3B** The simple past implies the completion of an event. The past continuous often emphasizes the activity or process. The past continuous activity may or may not have been completed.

**Simple Present (Stative)**  
He wrote a letter in the library and mailed it on his way home.  
(He finished the letter.)

**Present Continuous (Active)**  
He was writing a letter in the library when the lights went out. (We don't know if he finished the letter.)

---

### The Past Continuous for Background Information

**4** The past continuous often appears at the beginning of a narrative to describe background activities. It can express several background activities happening at the same time as the main event. The main event is in the simple past.

It was raining hard outside. I was sleeping and my roommate was taking a shower.  
At exactly 7:00 A.M., there was a huge clap of thunder. I jumped up as the house shook violently...
C1 Listening for Meaning and Use

Listen to descriptions of these activities. Check (✔) whether the activity is completed at the end of the description or may continue after the end of the description.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>COMPLETED</th>
<th>MAY CONTINUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. writing a book</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. eating dinner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. painting his kitchen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. baking a cake</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. writing a letter</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C2 Describing Activities in Progress in the Past

Look at the picture and describe the different activities that were happening yesterday afternoon at the public library. Use the past continuous.

Many people were waiting in line at the reference desk. One man was chasing his child around the book carts.
C3 Contrasting In-Progress and Completed Past Situations

Read this interview by a dorm advisor who is investigating a false fire alarm in a college dorm. Choose the simple past or past continuous forms that best complete the conversation.

Advisor: What (did you notice / were you noticing) last night?

Student: It was after dinner and I was in the student lounge. Four male students (played / were playing) a game at a table. Three others (studied / were studying) together on the couches. A female student (read / was reading) a newspaper in the corner. I (did / was doing) a crossword puzzle. At eight o'clock, I (heard / was hearing) two of my friends in the hall. They (told / were telling) jokes, so I (went / was going) into the hall to talk to them. On the way back to my seat, I (stopped / was stopping) to talk to the guys at the table. Suddenly we (heard / were hearing) the fire alarm go off. We all (jumped / were jumping) up and (ran / were running) out of the lounge. We (didn't smell / weren't smelling) smoke and we (didn't see / weren't seeing) anything suspicious, but just to be safe we (went / were going) down the emergency stairs and (got / were getting) out of the building as fast as we could.

C4 Describing Background Activities

A. Write two past continuous sentences that describe activities that were happening at the same time as each of the simple past events.

1. My phone rang at 7:00 A.M.
   
   I was sleeping. My roommate was taking a shower.

2. We watched the evening news at 6:30.

3. Lightning struck a huge tree in our yard this afternoon.

4. I stopped at the supermarket on my way home from work.

5. My computer crashed last night.

6. The fire alarm rang during class.

B. Write a paragraph about an item in part A. Begin with background information in the past continuous. Then use the simple past to describe the main event.

At 7:00 A.M., I was sleeping and my roommate was taking a shower. Suddenly, the phone rang. I jumped out of bed, picked up the phone, and said sleepily, "Hello?...
Vocabulary Notes

Habitual Past with Used To and Would

Used To  Used to is a special simple past tense verb. Used to suggests a comparison between the past and the present. It suggests that a repeated action or state was true in the past, but is not true now, even if the present is not mentioned.

- We used to go skating a lot. Now we go skiing.
- We didn’t use to play cards.

Used To and Would  In affirmative statements, would can sometimes replace used to without changing the meaning. Would generally combines only with verbs that express actions.

- When I was young, we would go skating a lot.
- X We would live in China. (INCORRECT)

In a description about the past, used to can appear once or twice at the beginning of a paragraph, but would is used to provide the details in the rest of the story.

- In the 1980s, I used to work for a big company that was far from my home. Every morning I would get up at 6:00 A.M. to get ready for work. I would leave the house by 7:00 A.M. Sometimes I would carpool with a neighbor...

C5 Describing the Habitual Past

Work with a partner. Put these sentences in order to form a meaningful paragraph. Discuss the use of the simple past, used to, and would.

1. That all changed a few summers ago after we finished college and got our first jobs.
2. In the mornings, my twin brother and I would get up early and go for hikes in the woods.
3. My family and I used to spend all our summers at a cottage on a lake.
4. We didn’t have a TV at the cottage, so we would spend our evenings talking and reading.
5. We miss the lake and all the wonderful times we used to have there.
6. Our cottage there was like our home away from home, and we loved our life there.
7. In the afternoons, we’d meet our friends and go swimming at the lake.
8. Every June we would leave our apartment in New York City and head for the lake.
Beyond the Sentence

Using the Simple Past in Discourse

Simple Present Introductions to Descriptions of the Past  General statements in the simple present can often introduce simple past descriptions. The simple past gives specific details about the simple present statement.

Voice mail systems are often frustrating. Last week, I tried to call an airline company. First, I listened to a menu with six different choices. Then I...

Time Expressions with the Simple Past  In a simple past description, a time expression such as last weekend often appears in the description, but not in every sentence. Each sentence relates to this time until a new expression appears. Often a change of time expression (for example, now) signals a change in tense.

I called Jill last weekend, and she was sick with the flu. She sounded terrible so we didn’t talk very long. I spoke to her again this morning, and she was much better. She’s back at work now, and everything seems fine.

C6 Using the Simple Past in Discourse

A.  Read each simple present introductory statement. Then write a sentence in the simple past that adds a detail. Tell when the particular experience happened.

1.  You can’t depend on the weather.  Last year, we ran into terrible fog during our trip through Austria.

2.  I still remember my childhood.

3.  I don’t like long lines.

B.  Write a short paragraph. Choose one of the items in part A. Pay attention to your use of time expressions for keeping or changing sentences.

You can’t depend on the weather. Last year, we ran into terrible fog during our trip through Austria. It was our first time in the Austrian countryside, and we barely saw anything as we rode from town to town. The whole countryside was under a dense fog. We were very disappointed so we...
The Simple Past and the Past Continuous in Time Clauses

Think Critically About Meaning and Use

A. Read the sentences and answer the questions below.
   a. They were talking about the passengers when they suddenly felt the vibration.
   b. Some people were sleeping while others were playing cards.
   c. When the bell rang, he yelled to his assistant.

1. **ANALYZE** Which sentence shows that one completed event happened after another completed event?
2. **ANALYZE** Which sentence shows that one event interrupted another event?
3. **ANALYZE** Which sentence shows that two events were happening at the same time?

B. Discuss your answers with the class and read the Meaning and Use Notes to check them.

### Meaning and Use Notes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Sequential Events</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1A</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past time clauses describe the time relationship of two past events and show the order of those events. Sentences with two simple past clauses can show that one completed event happened after the other. <strong>Before</strong>, <strong>after</strong>, or <strong>when</strong> introduces the time clause.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Simple Past (1st Event)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wrote the letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After I heard the news,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I heard the news,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Simple Past (2nd Event)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before I heard the news.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wrote the letter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wrote the letter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **1B** |
| Sometimes a sentence with a when or after time clause expresses a cause-and-effect relationship. The first event causes the second event. |
| **Cause (1st Event)** |
| When the power went out, |
| After the power went out, |
| **Effect (2nd Event)** |
| the room got completely dark. |
| the room got completely dark. |

*(Continued on page 42)*
### Interrupted Events

> **2A** Sentences with one simple past and one past continuous clause typically show that a simple past event interrupted a past continuous event.

He was studying for exams when the lights went out.

*OR*

Before the lights went out, he was studying for exams.

> **2B** Both *while* and *when* introduce a past continuous clause that means “during the time.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past Continuous (1st Event)</th>
<th>Simple Past (2nd Event)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>While I was dancing,</td>
<td>I lost my necklace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I was dancing,</td>
<td>I lost my necklace.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

> **2C** *When* can also introduce a simple past clause that means “at the time,” but *while* cannot.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past Continuous (1st Event)</th>
<th>Simple Past (2nd Event)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was dancing</td>
<td>when I lost my necklace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ I was dancing</td>
<td>while I lost my necklace. (<em>incorrect</em>)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Simultaneous Events

> **3** Sentences with two past continuous clauses typically show that two activities were happening at the same time. Both *while* and *when* can introduce the time clause.

**Past Continuous**

- They were laughing
- They were laughing

**Past Continuous**

- while they were playing cards.
- when they were playing cards.
D1 Listening for Meaning and Use

Listen to the two events in each statement and choose the event that happened or started first.

1. a. I went home.
   b. I opened the mail.
2. a. I played tennis.
   b. I took a shower.
3. a. The phone rang.
   b. I was fixing the bathroom sink.
4. a. She came home.
   b. It started to rain.
5. a. I was waiting for John.
   b. I saw Erica.
6. a. The water ran out.
   b. I opened the drain.
7. a. I called the operator.
   b. She connected me with Bogotá.
8. a. I shouted.
   b. She turned around.

D2 Using Past Time Clauses

Work in groups. Read this account of the Johnstown Flood of 1889. Make notes about what happened. Then make up as many sentences as you can with while, when, before, and after time clauses. Include sequential, interrupted, and simultaneous events in your sentences.

Before the water crashed into Johnstown, the train engineer tried to warn people.

It was May 31, 1889. It was raining, and the waters of a nearby lake were rising. The South Fork Dam was sagging. A few minutes after 3:00 p.m. that day, the dam collapsed and a 40-foot wall of water headed toward Johnstown, 14 miles away. A train engineer outside of the town tried to warn people that the flood was coming. He sped down the track and blew his train whistle loudly. This time, he didn’t toot the whistle three times in his usual friendly way. Instead, he made the whistle wail in a way that survivors remembered years later.

The water crashed into Johnstown at a very high speed. Some people called it a tidal wave. The flood destroyed everything in its path. It wiped out villages, bridges, and freight trains. Many people had no time to leave their homes. They ran to the upper floors of their houses and they climbed onto their roofs. The force of the water lifted some houses and knocked them into each other. Other people were luckier. They were able to escape to the hills right above Johnstown.

After the tragedy, people from around the world donated 4 million dollars to help Johnstown, and more than 200 photographers came to record the story. It was the first big international news event. Johnstown survived two more major floods in 1936 and 1977.
D3 Relating Events with **Before** and **After**

A. Describe the changes in each pair of pictures. Use *before* and *after*.

**Situation 1:** Her grades came in the mail.

*Before her grades came in the mail, she was worried. After her grades came in the mail...*

**Situation 2:** He tripped and fell.

**Situation 3:** Their parents came home.

B. Write a short story about one of the pairs of pictures. Use time clauses in your story to describe what happened before and after.

*Elena was standing at the window, waiting for the mail. Her exam grades were late...*
**D4 Understanding Cause and Effect**

Work with a partner. Read each pair of sentences and label the cause and the effect. Then combine the sentences, using *when* or *after* to express the cause. Discuss why more than one answer is possible in some sentences.

1. a. The roads became icy. **effect**
   b. The temperature dropped below freezing. **cause**
   
   *When the temperature dropped below freezing, the roads became icy.*

2. a. They had to call for help. __________
   b. They ran out of gas. __________

3. a. The lightning struck. __________
   b. The lights went out. __________

4. a. They painted their house bright pink. __________
   b. The neighbors refused to talk to them. __________

5. a. He went on a strict diet. __________
   b. His best suit didn't fit anymore. __________

6. a. Her arm started to itch. __________
   b. A mosquito bit her. __________

7. a. The doorbell rang. __________
   b. He answered the door. __________

8. a. She found the lost jewelry. __________
   b. She got a reward. __________
D5 Talking About Interrupted Activities

A. Complete this email message by writing sentences with *when* and *while* time clauses about the events in parentheses. Use the simple past or the past continuous.

---

From: lsmith@email.com
To: miguel@email.com
Subject: A Very Bad Day

Hi Miguel!

You wouldn't believe what a terrible day I had! **While I was trying to sleep,**

---

*1* the cat jumped on my chest (I try to sleep / the cat jumps on my chest).

---

So I got up to let him go out, but ____________________ (I go down the stairs / I trip on a shoe). By this time, I was fully awake even though it was just 5:15 in the morning. So I decided to make breakfast. Would you believe that ____________________ (I make coffee / I spill the whole can of coffee on the floor)? I tried to calm down, eat my breakfast, and get ready for school. But ____________________ (I take a shower / the phone rings). So I got out of the shower to answer it, but ____________________ (I step out of the shower / I slip on the wet floor). I finally answered the phone, and it was an old friend who drives me crazy! He asked to come and visit me. I told him he couldn't come. ____________________ (I try to explain / he gets mad and hangs up).

---

Well, I got to school all right. The most important thing that I had to do today was to write a paper for my economics class. Well, guess what? ____________________ (I write the paper / the computer system goes down). I had to go to class without my paper. Then ____________________ (I ride the elevator to class / it gets stuck). I was 45 minutes late, so I missed most of my class. Fortunately, my professor has a sense of humor.

---

Thanks for reading all of this nonsense! How was your day?

---

B. Work with a partner. Can you remember a day when something unexpected happened? Take turns telling each other what happened. Use time clauses and the simple past or the past continuous.
Think Critically About Meaning and Use

A. Read each sentence and the statement that follows. Write T if the statement is true, F if it is false, or ? if you do not have enough information to decide.

1. Before the storm arrived, the weather stations were warning us about it.
   F  The storm began before the weather stations warned us.

2. The children were building a snowman while it was snowing.
   ?  They finished the snowman.

3. He wrote a book about the Titanic.
   ?  He completed the book.

4. We lost our power when a tree came down.
   ?  A tree came down after we lost our power.

5. He was listening to the news while she was sleeping.
   ?  She fell asleep before the news started.

B. Discuss these questions in small groups.

1. **COMPARE AND CONTRAST** What happens to the meaning of sentence 2 if we change were building to built?

2. **GENERATE** How could you expand sentence 3 to make it more informative? (Make 3 different sentences using while, before, and when.)

Edit

Some of these sentences have errors. Find the errors and correct them.

1. While he was taking a shower, when someone called.

2. After he fell asleep, he was reading a book.

3. Were you having your own car in college?

4. He didn't go to class yesterday.

5. Oh, no! I was dropping my earring. I can't find it.

6. I dialed again, after I heard the dial tone.
Write

Write a narrative essay about a memorable experience from your childhood. Use the simple past, the past continuous, and the habitual past with used to and would.

1. **BRAINSTORM** Think about all the things you might want to include when writing about the experience. Use these categories to help you organize your ideas into paragraphs.
   - What your life was like **around the time of the experience**: how old you were; things you used to do or think; places and/or people that were important to you
   - The **memorable experience**: background activities that were happening when the experience began; the series of events that made up the memorable experience
   - Why the experience was **important to you**: what you learned; how it affected you

2. **WRITE A FIRST DRAFT** Before you write your first draft, read the checklist below and look at the examples in tasks C3, C4, and C5 on pages 38–39.

3. **EDIT** Read your work and check it against the checklist below. Circle grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DO I ...</th>
<th>YES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>organize my ideas into paragraphs?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use used to and would to talk about the habitual past?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use the past continuous for background activities and activities in progress?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use the simple past for main events and completed states and situations?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use past time expressions and past time clauses?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. **PEER REVIEW** Work with a partner to help you decide how to fix your errors and improve the content. Use the checklist above.

5. **REWRITE YOUR DRAFT** Using the comments from your partner, write a final draft.

   One of my most memorable experiences of my childhood happened when I was ten. At the time, I was a very lonely child. I used to come straight home from school, and after dinner, I'd go to my room and spend the evening by myself...