PDF 1: The Scene-Setter & Interrupted Actions.



PAST CONTINUOUS (PAST PROGRESSIVE)

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The Scene-Setter & Interrupted Actions

The Movie Director Rule

Think of the Past Continuous (*was / were + -ing*) as background camera footage setting the scene, while the Past Simple interrupts with a sudden action.

- **Example:** "I *was drinking* coffee (background action) when the cat *jumped* on the table (sudden interruption)."

Exercise 1: The Scene at Cafe Luna (08:30 AM Yesterday)

Complete the scene setting using the correct form of **was / were + -ing**.

1. The barista _____ (steam) milk while three customers _____ (wait) in line.
2. Outside, a street musician _____ (play) the saxophone quietly.
3. Two business executives _____ (argue) about a contract near the window.
4. I _____ (try) to read my book, but my phone _____ (buzz) continuously.
5. Suddenly, a dog ran into the shop and grabbed a bagel!

Exercise 2: Combine with 'When' and 'While'

Connect the background action with the interruption using **when** or **while**.

1. (I / take a shower) + (the fire alarm / start ringing) → **I was taking a shower when the fire alarm started ringing.**
2. (The teacher / explain the grammar) + (a bird / fly into the classroom) →

   _____
3. (We / drive to the airport) + (the tire / burst) →

   _____
4. (Sarah / chop onions) + (she / cut her finger) →

   _____

Exercise 3: Spot & Fix the AI Blunders (Error Correction)

Each sentence contains a common mistake. Rewrite it correctly.

1. ❌ "*I was knowing the answer when the teacher asked me.*"

   ✔ Correct: _____

   (Hint: Stative verbs!)

2. ❌ "*While we cooked dinner, the lights went out suddenly.*"

   ✔ Correct: _____

3. ❌ "*They playing tennis when it started raining heavily.*"

   ✔ Correct: _____

4. ❌ "*What were you do yesterday at 3:00 PM?*"

   ✔ Correct: _____

Exercise 4: The Unexpected Chaos (Micro-Story Creation)

Finish these dramatic sentences with your own creative interruptions!

1. I was singing in the shower at full volume when... _____

   _____

2. We were secretly eating cake in the kitchen when... _____

   _____

3. The boss was presenting the monthly sales numbers when... _____

   _____

4. Everyone was sleeping peacefully on the bus when... _____

   _____

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Answer Key

Exercise 1: 1. was steaming / were waiting | 2. was playing | 3. were arguing | 4. was trying / was buzzing

Exercise 2: 2. ...explanations when a bird flew into the classroom. | 3. We were driving to the airport when the tire burst. | 4. Sarah was chopping onions when she cut her finger.

Exercise 3: 1. "I knew the answer..." (*Know* is a stative verb; no -ing). | 2. "While we were cooking dinner..." | 3. "They were playing tennis..." | 4. "What were you doing yesterday...?"

Exercise 4: Accept any grammatically correct past simple clauses (e.g., *...when the door unlocked.*).

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