

Past Continuous Tense

The past continuous tense is used to talk about a long action in the past, 2 actions happening simultaneously or one action interrupting another action in the past, with the before and after structure, when setting the scene, to talk about a past change or growth and with the verb to wonder.

Subject	Verb to Be	Present Participle
I	was	reading
you	were	reading
he/she/it	was	reading
we	were	reading
they	were	reading

In the affirmative, we use the SuWaP structure: subject, verb to be (past simple) and the present participle.

Subject	Verb to Be	Present Participle
I	wasn't	reading
you	weren't	reading
he/she/it	wasn't	reading
we	weren't	reading
they	weren't	reading

In the negative, we use the same SuWaP structure, but the verb to be is used in the negative form. We can also contract the negative form of the verb to be.

Question	Verb to Be	Subject	Present Participle
What	was	I	reading?
	were	you	reading?
	was	he/she/it	reading?
	were	we	reading?
	were	they	reading?

There are two question forms in the past continuous. QuWaSuP, if you use a question word, and WaSuP, without a question word.

Verb to Be	Subject	Present Participle
Was	I	reading?
Were	you	reading?
Was	he/she/it	reading?
Were	we	reading?
Were	they	reading?

The short response is yes or no, plus the subject and then the verb to be.

Response	Subject	Verb to Be
Yes	I	was
	you	were
	he/she/it	was
	we	were
	they	were

Response	Subject	Verb to Be
No	I	wasn't
	you	weren't
	he/she/it	wasn't
	we	weren't
	they	weren't

PRESENT PARTICIPLE

- Normal rule (+ING): *drink* → *drinking*
- CVC rule (double last consonant +ING): *cut* → *cutting*
Exceptions: last letter W, Y or stress on first syllable (+ING only) *draw* → *drawing*
- E rule (eliminate E +ING): *drive* → *driving*
Exceptions: EE Ending (+ING only) *see* → *seeing*
- IE rule (eliminate IE + Y +ING): *die* → *dying*
- C rule (+ K + ING): *picnic* → *picnicking*

KEYWORDS

While → before past continuous phrase
As → before past continuous phrase
All → plus time phrase
From ... To → plus two time phrases
Through → plus time phrase
For → plus time phrase

Pronunciation can be /ɪŋ/ /ɪn/ or /ən/. The ING is never stressed, always the infinitive part.