

# 47 Past continuous



## 1 Form

### POSITIVE

I/He/She/It *was working*.

We/You/They *were working*

### NEGATIVE

I/He/She/It *was not (wasn't) working*

We/You/They *were not (weren't) working*.

### QUESTIONS

*Was I/he/she/it working?*

*Were we/you/they working?*

### SHORT ANSWERS

Yes, I/he/she/it *was*.

Yes, we/you/they *were*.

No, we/you/they *weren't*.

No, we/you/they *weren't*.

We form the past continuous with *was/were* + the *-ing* form of the verb.

Spelling rules for *-ing* forms ► page 316

## 2 Use

We use the past continuous

- to describe an action at or around a time in the past:

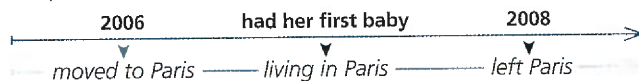
*At seven o'clock Marek **was making** the dinner and Isabella **was putting** the children to bed. I **was watching** TV at nine o'clock.*



The action started before nine o'clock and can continue after it.

- for temporary situations in the past:

*Sally **was living** in Paris when she had her first baby.*



- to describe a scene in the past, especially when you are telling a story:

*When we arrived at the beach, the sun **was shining**.*

*They **were cleaning** the swimming pool when we got to the hotel.*

- to describe something you did until an event interrupted you and stopped you:

*I **was watching** TV when the phone **rang**.*



*James Dean **was driving** a Porsche when he **died**.*

*Gerald **was playing** football when he **hurt** his arm.*



We don't usually use verbs, such as *like, see, hear, think, agree* in the past continuous.

Verbs that don't use the continuous form ► Unit 41.2