

A2

SIGNAL WORDS

≈ 27 MIN

Signal Words: Past Continuous — *practice on paper*

You have built the lesson — now lock in the past continuous signals on paper. New sentences, same question: what was in progress back then?

In progress: **was / were + -ing** · Before a clause: **while** (before a noun: during)

NAME

DATE

YOUR BUILD

1 · SORTING

2 · FILL-IN

3 · CORRECT

4 · WRITE

BRICK 1 · SORT BY "WHILE" AND "DURING" · APPROX. 4 MIN

● ○ ○

Which word fits where you see "..."? **while** — before a whole clause with a subject and a verb — goes on the left.
during — before a noun — goes on the right.

... the laptop was restarting, I made tea.

I fell asleep ... the long flight.

Nobody spoke ... the presentation.

She took notes ... the CEO was talking.

Mia was emailing ... I was on the phone.

... lunch, the courier rang the bell.

The Wi-Fi crashed ... we were testing.

Two clients called ... my holiday.

Sales dropped ... the strike.

... Ben was driving, I read the report.

WHILE · + CLAUSE

DURING · + NOUN

BRICK 2 · FILL IN THE MISSING WORD · APPROX. 6 MIN

● ● ○

Fill in the missing word. Every sentence is about something that was in progress back then — read it through before you write.

01 At 8 a.m. yesterday, Lena still sitting in a traffic jam.02 The engineers testing the new machine when the power failed.03 I was preparing the invoice, the client changed the order.04 We were having a coffee break the courier arrived.05 Nobody answered the phone the team meeting — we were all in the big room.06 At 11 p.m. they were working on the offer.07 What you doing at 3 p.m. yesterday? I tried to call you.08 that moment my laptop was updating, so I missed the call.

YOUR BUILD

1 · SORTING

2 · FILL-IN

3 · CORRECT

4 · WRITE

BRICK 3 · FIND AND CORRECT THE MISTAKE · APPROX. 7 MIN



Each sentence holds exactly one mistake. Underline it and write the whole sentence correctly.

01 During the boss was speaking, Max checked his phone.

02 At 10 a.m. yesterday I was write the agenda.

03 The drivers was loading the truck when it started to rain.

04 I was knowing the answer, but I said nothing.

05 What did you doing at 7 p.m. on Friday?

06 The heating broke while we working on the budget.

BRICK 4 · WRITE YOUR OWN SENTENCES · APPROX. 8 MIN



Write one true sentence about your last working week for each prompt. Ask yourself every time: what was in progress back then?

01 An exact moment — "At ... yesterday I was ..."

02 The running action — "While I was ..., ..."

03 The short event — "I was ... when ..."

04 A noun after during — "During the ..., ..."

MINI-CHECK — CAN I DO THIS YET?

☐ I form the past continuous with "was" or "were" plus the verb with -ing.

☐ With an exact moment I ask: was the action in progress then?

☐ Before a whole clause I say "while"; before a noun I say "during".

☐ For the short event after "when" I usually use the past simple.

Not every box ticked? Build the lesson once more and try this sheet again tomorrow.

Answer key

Check only when you have finished. Every answer comes with the **why** — the rule matters more than the result.

BRICK 1 · SORTING

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>01 while — "While the laptop was restarting, I made tea."
<i>A whole clause follows.</i></p> <p>02 during — "I fell asleep during the long flight."
<i>A noun follows.</i></p> <p>03 during — "Nobody spoke during the presentation."
<i>A noun follows.</i></p> <p>04 while — "She took notes while the CEO was talking."
<i>Clause with subject and verb.</i></p> <p>05 while — "Mia was emailing while I was on the phone."
<i>Clause with subject and verb.</i></p> | <p>06 during — "During lunch, the courier rang the bell."
<i>A noun follows.</i></p> <p>07 while — "The Wi-Fi crashed while we were testing."
<i>A whole clause follows.</i></p> <p>08 during — "Two clients called during my holiday."
<i>A noun follows.</i></p> <p>09 during — "Sales dropped during the strike."
<i>A noun follows.</i></p> <p>10 while — "While Ben was driving, I read the report."
<i>A whole clause follows.</i></p> |
|---|---|

BRICK 2 · FILL-IN

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>01 At 8 a.m. yesterday, Lena was still sitting in a traffic jam.
<i>"Lena" → was + -ing.</i></p> <p>02 The engineers were testing the new machine when the power failed.
<i>Plural → were + -ing.</i></p> <p>03 While (or As / When) I was preparing the invoice, the client changed the order.
<i>Opens the running action.</i></p> <p>04 We were having a coffee break when (or until / as) the courier arrived.
<i>A short event breaks in.</i></p> | <p>05 Nobody answered the phone during (or in / at / throughout) the team meeting — we were all in the big room.
<i>Before a noun: during.</i></p> <p>06 At 11 p.m. they were still (or busy / all / both) working on the offer.
<i>The work was still in progress.</i></p> <p>07 What were you doing at 3 p.m. yesterday? I tried to call you.
<i>Question: were + you + -ing.</i></p> <p>08 At (or In) that moment my laptop was updating, so I missed the call.
<i>Exact moment: at that moment.</i></p> |
|---|--|

BRICK 3 · CORRECT

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>01 While (or As / When) the boss was speaking, Max checked his phone.
<i>Before a clause: while, not during.</i></p> <p>02 At 10 a.m. yesterday I was writing (or I wrote) the agenda.
<i>After was, the verb with -ing.</i></p> <p>03 The drivers were loading the truck when it started to rain.
(Or: The driver was ...)
<i>Plural → were.</i></p> | <p>04 I knew the answer, but I said nothing.
<i>"Know" normally takes no -ing.</i></p> <p>05 What were you doing at 7 p.m. on Friday? (Or: What did you do ...?)
<i>Question: were + you + -ing.</i></p> <p>06 The heating broke while we were working (or worked) on the budget.
<i>The auxiliary were was missing — or past simple.</i></p> |
|--|--|

BRICK 4 · WRITE

Your sentences may differ — just check the signal and the form.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>01 "At 4 p.m. yesterday I was checking the orders."
<i>Exact moment.</i></p> <p>02 "While I was waiting for the bus, I read my emails."
<i>Running action.</i></p> | <p>03 "I was printing the slides when the meeting started."
<i>Short event.</i></p> <p>04 "During the workshop, I took lots of notes."
<i>During + noun.</i></p> |
|---|--|

NEXT BRICKS — KEEP BUILDING FREE ONLINE

PREREQUISITE

Signal Words: Past Simple

englisch-lehrer.com/en/lessons/signal-words-past-simple

PAIR WITH THIS

Past Continuous

englisch-lehrer.com/en/lessons/past-continuous

ALL LESSONS

45+ free lessons

englisch-lehrer.com/en/lessons

HANOVER

Schaufelder Straße 11 · 30167
englisch-lehrer.com/hannover

BERLIN

Kurfürstendamm 30 · 10719
englisch-lehrer.com/berlin

ONLINE COURSES

englisch-lehrer.com/online
worldwide on Zoom

CONTACT

+49 511 4739339
james@englisch-lehrer.com

