The past continuous tense

The past continuous tense is used to talk about actions or events that were going on around a particular point of time in the past.

Form: Subject + was / were + ing form of the verb.

What were you doing when the guests turned up? I was working in the garage.
The past continuous and simple past tenses are commonly used together. In this case, the simple past tense is used to refer to the shorter action that happens in the middle of a longer background action.

I was having (past continuous) a bath when the telephone rang (simple past).
We were having lunch when someone knocked on the door.
I was doing my homework when the lights went out.
She was cooking dinner when guests arrived.
I was watching TV when Rahul called.
Exercise

Fill in the blanks with an appropriate auxiliary verb.

1. What .... you doing at 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon?

was
were

2. I .... playing with my dog.

was

The past continuous tense

were

3. What .... you doing at 8 o'clock in the morning?

was
were

4. I .... getting ready for work.

was
were

5. What .... he doing in the garden?

was
were

6. He .... watering the plants.

was
were

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7. What .... Sam doing yesterday evening?

was

were

8. Sam .... watching a movie on TV.

was

were

9. What .... Maria doing yesterday?

was

were

10. Maria .... reading some books.

was

were

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11. What .... the children doing in the evening?

was

were

12. The children .... playing in the park.

was

were

Answers

1. What were you doing at 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon?

2. I was playing with my dog.

3. What were you doing at 8 o'clock in the morning?

4. I was getting ready for work.

5. What was he doing in the garden?

6. He was watering the plants.

7. What was Sam doing yesterday evening?

8. Sam was watching a movie on TV.

9. What was Maria doing yesterday?

10. Maria was reading some books.

11. What were the children doing in the evening?

12. The children were playing in the park.