Past Continuous — Worksheet

30 exercises · Level B1–B2 · Answer key on the last page Free for classroom use

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Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Choose the correct option (a–d) for each gap or question. Check yourself with the answer key on the last page.

1. At ten o'clock last night I _____ for my history exam.
   a) were studying b) was studing c) was studying d) am studying

2. The children _____ outside when it started to snow.
   a) was playing b) were playing c) were play d) are playing

3. I _____ attention, so I didn't hear the teacher's question.
   a) weren't paying b) didn't paying c) wasn't pay d) wasn't paying

4. Luckily we _____ very fast, so nobody was hurt in the accident.
   a) wasn't driving b) didn't driving c) weren't driving d) weren't drive

5. What _____ you _____ at midnight? I saw your light on.
   a) were … doing b) was … doing c) did … doing d) were … do

6. _____ it _____ when you left the house this morning?
   a) Were … raining b) Was … raining c) Did … raining d) Was … rain

7. I _____ in the park when I met my old teacher.
   a) was jogging b) was joging c) were jogging d) jogging

8. On the train yesterday you _____ so loudly on the phone that everyone could hear.
   a) was talking b) were talk c) were talking d) are talking

9. I _____ dinner when the lights suddenly went out.
   a) were cooking b) was cook c) am cooking d) was cooking

10. We were walking home when we _____ a strange noise behind us.
    a) heard b) were hearing c) hear d) have heard

11. She was crossing the road when a car _____ out of nowhere.
    a) was appearing b) appears c) has appeared d) appeared

12. It was a beautiful morning. The sun _____ and the birds were singing.
    a) were shining b) was shining c) is shining d) was shine

13. This time yesterday I _____ on a beach in Spain.
    a) were lying b) was lieing c) lied d) was lying

14. While I _____ the dishes, my husband was cleaning the floor.
    a) were washing b) was wash c) was washing d) am washing

15. Someone stole my bag while I _____ for the bus.

a) was waiting b) were waiting c) am waiting d) was wait

16. I cut my finger _____ I was chopping onions.

a) during b) meanwhile c) until d) while

17. _____ the meeting, my phone rang twice.

a) While b) When c) During d) For

18. She saw the spider, screamed and _____ out of the room.

a) was running b) runs c) has run d) ran

19. I _____ what to do, so I called my sister for advice.

a) wasn't knowing b) didn't know c) don't know d) weren't knowing

20. In those days we _____ a car, so we cycled everywhere.

a) didn't own b) weren't owning c) didn't owning d) wasn't owning

21. I _____ a book on the sofa when I _____ asleep.

a) read … was falling b) was reading … fell c) was reading … was falling d) read … fell

22. When the fire alarm _____, we _____ an exam, so we all had to leave.

a) went off … were taking b) went off … took c) went off … was taking d) goes off … were taking

23. Who _____ you _____ to on the phone when I came in? You hung up at once.

a) did … talk b) were … talking c) was … talking d) were … talk

24. I saw Emma in the café yesterday. She _____ with a man I didn't know.

a) were sitting b) is sitting c) was sit d) was sitting

25. While we _____ through the forest, we _____ a deer.

a) walked … were seeing b) were walking … were seeing c) were walking … saw d) was walking … saw

26. Which sentence is correct?

a) I was watching TV when you called.
b) I am watching TV when you called.
c) I was watch TV when you called.
d) I were watching TV when you called.

27. Which question is correct?

a) Was you sleeping when I called?
b) Did you sleeping when I called?
c) Were you sleeping when I called?
d) Were you sleep when I called?

28. Which sentence is correct?

a) She was knowing the answer, but she said nothing.
b) She knew the answer, but she said nothing.
c) She knowed the answer, but she said nothing.
d) She were knowing the answer, but she said nothing.

29. Which sentence is correct?

a) While we having lunch, it started to rain.
b) While we was having lunch, it started to rain.
c) While we were having lunch, it was start to rain.
d) While we were having lunch, it started to rain.

30. Which sentence is correct?

a) During I was cooking, the doorbell rang.
b) While I was cooking, the doorbell rang.
c) While I cooking, the doorbell rang.
d) While I was cook, the doorbell rang.

Answer Key

Past Continuous · Explanations are shortened — the full interactive version is at gramvoy.com/exercises/past-continuous/

1. c) was studying
At ten o'clock last night is a moment in the past, and the studying was…

2. b) were playing
The game was in progress when the snow started, so the past continuous.

3. d) wasn't paying
The inattention was going on when the teacher asked, so the past…

4. c) weren't driving
We takes were, so the negative is weren't driving.

5. a) were … doing
The question asks what was in progress at a past moment, midnight: What…

6. b) Was … raining
The question puts was before the subject: Was it raining…?

7. a) was jogging
Jog ends in one short vowel + one consonant, so the g doubles: jogging.

8. c) were talking
You takes were, even for one person: you were talking.

9. d) was cooking
The cooking was the longer action in progress; the lights going out…

10. a) heard
The noise is the short event that interrupted the walk, so the past…

11. d) appeared
The car's appearance is a sudden, short event, so the past simple:…

12. b) was shining
The sentence sets the scene of a story, so the past continuous: the sun…

13. d) was lying
This time yesterday is a moment in the past, so the action in progress…

14. c) was washing
Two actions were in progress at the same time, so both are in the past…

15. a) was waiting
While introduces the longer action that was going on, so the past…

16. d) while
While + subject + past continuous gives the action in progress.

17. c) During
The meeting is a noun, so it needs During.

18. d) ran
The three actions happen one after another, so they all take the past…

19. b) didn't know
Know is a state verb, so it stays in the past simple even for a…

20. a) didn't own
Own is a state verb — possession, not an action — so it stays in the…

21. b) was reading … fell
Reading was the longer action in progress, so was reading; falling…

22. a) went off … were taking
The exam was in progress, so were taking (we takes were); the alarm is…

23. b) were … talking
The call had already started when I came in — you hung up at once — so…

24. d) was sitting
The sentence describes what was going on when you saw her, so the past…

25. c) were walking … saw
The walk was the longer action, so were walking; seeing the deer is the…

26. a) I was watching TV when you called.
The longer action in progress takes the past continuous (was watching),…

27. c) Were you sleeping when I called?
You always takes were, which goes before the subject in a question,…

28. b) She knew the answer, but she said nothing.
Know is a state verb, so it takes the past simple even for a situation…

29. d) While we were having lunch, it started to rain.
While + past continuous gives the longer action (we were having lunch),…

30. b) While I was cooking, the doorbell rang.
Before a subject and a verb use while: While I was cooking.