

SIMPLE PAST VS. PAST PROGRESSIVE PRACTICE

I. READING: POLICE INTERROGATION

Read the following police interrogation paying close attention to the simple past & past progressive tenses.

Police: What *were* you *doing* last Tuesday between 6 o'clock and 9 o'clock?

Patrick: Well, let's see. I *was* probably *doing* what I always do. I *was* with Christian. We *were eating* dinner. We *finished* around 7 o'clock.

Police: OK. So what *were* you *doing* between 7 o'clock and 9 o'clock?

Patrick: Between 7 o'clock and 9 o'clock? I *was chatting* with my "Amerloc" on the computer.

Police: And what *was* Christian *doing* while you *were chatting* with your "Amerloc"?

Patrick: I think he *was talking* on the phone. That's right. I remember now. I *was chatting* on the computer when the phone *rang*.

Police: HMMMM. I *thought* you only have one telephone line?

Patrick: OOPS!!! Well, uh.....

II. COMPREHENSION CHECK - Answer the following questions in COMPLETE sentences using the simple past or past progressive tense.

A. INFORMATION RECALL

1) What was Patrick doing last Tuesday night between 6 o'clock and 9 o'clock?

2) What were Patrick & Christian doing between 7 o'clock & 9 o'clock last Tuesday night?

B. INFERENCE

1) Was Patrick really chatting on the computer to his "Amerloc" while Christian was talking on the phone? If no, how can you be sure?

III. GRAMMAR EXERCISES

A. AT THE SCENE OF A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT - Complete the conversation with the simple past or the past progressive form of the verbs in parentheses.

Reporter: What was the cause of the accident, officer?

Officer: Well, it looks like there _____ (1. be) many causes. First of all, when the accident _____ (2. occur), the driver _____ (3. drive) much too fast. And while he _____ (4. drive) he _____ (5. speak) to a client on his car phone. When he _____ (6. see) the pedestrian, he immediately _____ (7. step) on the brakes, but it _____ (8. be) too late. The victim _____ (9. not pay) attention either. First of all, he _____ (10. not wait) for the traffic light to change. He _____ (11. cross) against a red when the car _____ (12. hit) him. He _____ (13. not see) the approaching car because he _____ (14. talk) to his friend. The friend _____ (15. not pay) attention either. He _____ (16. eat) an ice cream cone while he _____ (17. cross) the street. When he _____ (18. notice) the car, he _____ (19. try) to push his friend out of the way, but it was too late.

Reporter: How is the victim doing?

Officer: Well, when the ambulance _____ (20. arrive), he _____ (21. bleed) from his head wound, but the doctors _____ (22. stop) the bleeding, and they think he'll be ok.

B. ANSWER CAREFULLY. The police are questioning another suspect in the burglary last Tuesday. Read the suspect's answers. Use the words in parentheses in the simple past or past progressive tense to write the police officer's questions. Make all necessary changes. Pay close attention to word order in questions.

1. Police: What were you doing Tuesday night?
(what/you/do/Tuesday/night?)

Suspect: I was visiting a friend.

2. Police: _____
(who/exactly/you/visit?)

Suspect: My girlfriend. I got to her house at five thirty and drove her to work.

3. Police: _____
(she/work/at/7 o'clock?)

Suspect: yes, she was working the late shift.

4. Police: _____
(anyone else/work/with her?)
Suspect: No, she was working alone.
5. Police: _____
(what/you/do/while/she/work?)
Suspect: I was reading the paper in her office.
6. Police: _____
(what/you/do/when/lights go out?)
Suspect: My girlfriend. I got to her house at five thirty and drove her to work.
7. Police: _____
(what/you/do/when/lights/go out?)
Suspect: When the lights went out, we left the building.
8. Police: _____
(why/you/run/when/the police/see you?)
Suspect: We were running because we wanted to get out of the train.

I. **READING - NAMING SYSTEMS.** Read this excerpt from a journal article \ about naming systems.

Louisa Horvath *was following* tradition when she *named* her daughter Doris. "We *were going* to name her Amanda, but my great aunt Dorothy *died* just before she *was born*, so we *decided* to name the baby after her." Many cultures honor older family members by naming children after them. The Horvaths *were adhering* to an old Jewish custom which forbids naming a child after a living relative. However, in other western cultures, parents frequently name children after living relatives, especially parents and grandparents. "Before my son *was born*, the oldest boy *was always named* Walter," recalls one man. "As a boy, I *knew* I *was going* to break this tradition. I *was* just too uncomfortable with my father's name."

The practice of naming children after another person, living or deceased, has been frowned upon by different groups of people at different times. Believing that everyone should have a unique name, many Native American cultures even *kept* registers of available names and *appointed* officials who *gave* or *withheld* permission to use a name. As a result, Native Americans *never adopted* relatives' names. Instead, they often *used* names that *referred* to an event in someone's life. Sometimes they *chose* a name that *recalled* what *was happening* at the beginning of the mother's labor. A *Miwok* woman, for example, *was gathering* seeds for jewelry when her labor *began*. She *named* her child "Howotmila." (*Howotu* means "beads," and *howotmila* means "running hand down the branch of a bush to find seeds for beads.")

Incident naming, as this practice is called, is still used in many places, including modern Africa. "The sun *was shining* brightly when I *came* into the world," explains Ayadele. "In Swahili, my name means 'sunshine in the house.'"

The practice of incident naming may at first glance seem strange to Westerners. However, it is not unlike the derivation of some nicknames. One woman recalls: "In fourth grade, one of the boys *sneaked* a baby turtle into my lunchbox. It *crawled* out while I *was eating* lunch, and I *screamed* and *cried*. After that, everyone *called* me 'Turtle.'"

Incident naming and naming children after relatives are only two of many naming systems. Throughout history hopeful parents have also named children for some quality which they want their child to embody. This practice abounds all over the world. One East African man recalls: "My parents *named* me *Jahi*, which is a Swahili name meaning 'dignity.' They *wanted* me to get more education. Whenever I *was going* to give up, my name always *reminded* me of their hopes."

II. GRAMMAR EXERCISE - REMINISCING. Complete these conversations using the correct form of the verbs in parentheses - past progressive or the simple past tense.

- 1) Lilith: Someone _____ (call) you while you _____ (sleep).
 Kobe: _____ you _____ (write down) the name?
 Lilith: Here it is ---someone named Crackers.
 Kobe: Oh, yeah, Crackers. I _____ (meet) her at the restaurant when I _____ (work) evenings last summer.
 Lilith: Is Crackers her real name?
 Kobe: No, we _____ (nickname) her that because she _____ (always / eat) saltine crackers. It _____ (make) a lot of noise.
 Lilith: How annoying!!!
 Kobe: We _____ (get used to) it.
- 2) Aret: Where _____ you _____ (live) when your daughter _____ (be born)?
 Dede: We _____ (had) a very small apartment on Euclid Street. After her birth, we _____ (move) to this one.
 Aret: What _____ you _____ (do) at the time? Were you a teacher then?
 Dede: No, I was still a student. Actually, I _____ (take) a course at the college when I _____ (meet) my husband, "Storm." We _____ (marry) the year after.
- 3) Dennis: Is "Storm" your husband's real name, or is it a nickname?
 Dede: It's his real name.
 Dennis: How _____ he _____ (get) it?
 Dede: Well, before he _____ (be born), his parents _____ (name) him after his father and his father's father. But they never really _____ (like) the idea. They _____ (want) him to have a unique name. The night he _____ (be born), it _____ (rain) very hard. In fact, it was a hurricane. So, they _____ (change) their minds and _____ (name) him "Storm".
 Dennis: And when _____ he _____ (decided) to become a meteorologist?
 Dede: When he _____ (grow up), his playmates _____ (always ask) him, "Storm, how's the weather up there?" (He was also very tall for his age. So he _____ (decide) to go to school and really find out.
- 4) Val: Do you remember the time Terry _____ (fall) and _____ (hurt) her knee?
 Asmina: Uh-huh. She _____ (play) in the schoolyard when some older kid _____ (push) her. That's how she _____ (got) her nickname "Tumble".
- 5) Mip: Look at this photo. That's how my apartment _____ (look) right after the 1994 Los Angeles earthquake.
 Bob: That's terrible. What _____ you _____ (do) when the

earthquake _____ (strike)?
 Mip: I _____ (sleep). It _____ (happen) early in the morning. When the bed _____ (begin) to shake, I _____ (jump up) and _____ (run) over to the doorway. That's supposed to be one of the safest places to be.
 Bob: Then what _____ you _____ (do)?
 Mip: When it _____ (stop), I _____ (run) to my neighbor's. She _____ (still sleep). I couldn't believe it!!! To this day I still call her Mrs. Sleep-through-it-all.

III. SUPPLEMENTAL GRAMMAR EXERCISES

A. A CAREFUL MAN. Complete the sentences with the simple past or the past progressive of the verbs in parentheses.

Jorge: Do you want to hear a joke?
 Elizabeth: Sure.
 Jorge: Well, one day Christopher Columbus and his men _____ (1. sail) in the Atlantic Ocean. Suddenly, they _____ (2. notice) a small boat in the distance. They _____ (3. look) through the telescope and _____ (4. see) a man in the boat. He _____ (5. sit) quietly and _____ (6. read) a book. But he _____ (7. hold) a big basket of fish on top of his head! This _____ (8. be) very strange. Anyway, they _____ (9. take) the man on their ship. Then Christopher Columbus asked the man, "What _____ (10. happen) to you?" The man _____ (11. answer), "I live on an island many miles away. Yesterday morning, a big storm _____ (12. hit) my island. I _____ (13. fish) at that time. The storm _____ (14. push) my boat all the way out here." "But what about that basket? You _____ (15. hold) that big basket on your head. Why? "Oh," the man _____ (16. say), "I _____ (17. help) my boat. You see, my boat is very light and the basket is very heavy. I _____ (18. not want) the boat to sink. So I _____ (19. decide) to carry the basket myself.

Answer the following questions:

- 1) How did the man try to help the boat?

- 2) Was he really helping the boat? Why?

- 3) Was he a smart man? Why?

- 4) Was this a funny joke? _____

B. A MYSTERY. Complete the story below using the simple past or the past progressive tense of the verbs in parentheses.

While Mr. Smith _____ (1. be) in Las Vegas, he _____ (2. lose) a lot of money. He decided to leave. He sold his company and put the money in a bank in Geneva, Switzerland. He _____ (3. wear) his business suit when he _____ (4. get) on the train. But he was carrying his old clothes in his suitcase.

While the porter _____ (5. visit) the other compartments, Mr. Smith _____ (6. walk) quickly into the bathroom. When he _____ (7. go) inside the bathroom, he _____ (8. change) his clothes. While he _____ (9. change), he _____ (10. leave) his watch on the sink. When he _____ (11. come) out of the bathroom, he _____ (12. push) his suitcase out the window of the train.

When the porter _____ (13. see) him again, Mr. Smith _____ (14. wear) his old clothes. The porter _____ (15. not see) Mr. Smith's face while he _____ (16. talk) to him. Then Mr. Smith _____ (17. jump) off the train when it _____ (18. arrive) in Los Angeles.

When he _____ (19. check) in at Los Angeles International Airport, the plane _____ (20. wait) for him. While he _____ (21. fly) to Switzerland, the police _____ (22. look) for him. When he _____ (23. arrive) in Geneva, he sent a letter to his wife.

C. Use the simple past or the past progressive of the verbs in parentheses.

- 1) I am sitting in class right now. I _____ (sit) in class at this exact same time yesterday.
- 2) I don't want to go to the zoo today because it is raining. The same thing happened yesterday. I _____ (not want) to go to the zoo because it _____ (rain).
- 3) I _____ (call) Roger at nine last night, but he _____ (not be) at home. He _____ (study) at the library.
- 4) I _____ (not hear) the thunderstorm last night because I _____ (sleep).
- 5) It was beautiful yesterday when we went for a walk in the park. The sun _____ (shine). A cool breeze _____ (blow).
- 6) My brother and sister _____ (argue) about something when I _____ (walk) into the room.
- 7) I got a package in the mail. When I _____ (open) it, I _____ (find) a surprise.
- 8) While Mrs. Emerson _____ (read) the little boy a story, he _____ (fall) asleep, so she _____ (close) the book and quietly _____ (tiptoe) out of the room.
- 9) It was my first day of class. I _____ (finally find) the right room. The room _____ (already be) full of students. On one side of the room, students _____ (busily talk) to each other in Spanish. Other students _____ (speak) Japanese, and some _____ (converse) in Arabic. It sounded like the United Nations. Some of the students, however, _____ (just

sit) quietly by themselves. I _____ (choose) an empty seat in the last row and _____ (sit) down. In a few minutes, the teacher _____ (walk) into the room and all the multinational conversation _____ (stop).

10. A: Why weren't you at the meeting?

B: I _____ (wait) for an overseas call from my family.

11. A: _____ you _____ (hear) what she just said?

B: No, I _____ (not listen). I _____ (think) about something else.

12. A: How _____ you _____ (break) your arm?

B: I _____ (slip) on the ice while I _____ (cross) the street in front of the dorm.

13. A: I'm sure you met Carol Jones at the party last night.

B: I don't remember her. What _____ she _____ (wear)?