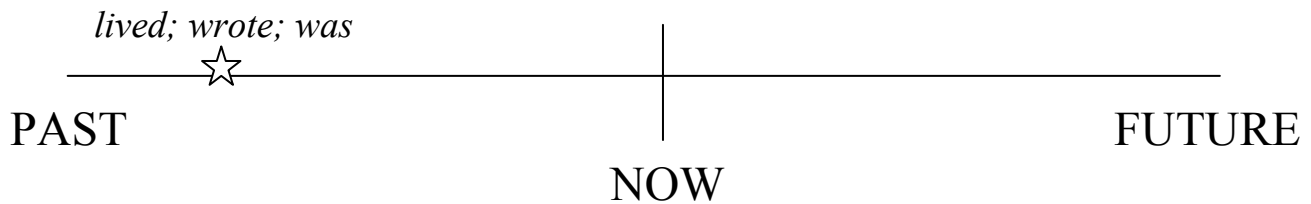


SIMPLE PAST

- I. Use the simple past tense to talk about actions, states, and situations in the past that are now FINISHED



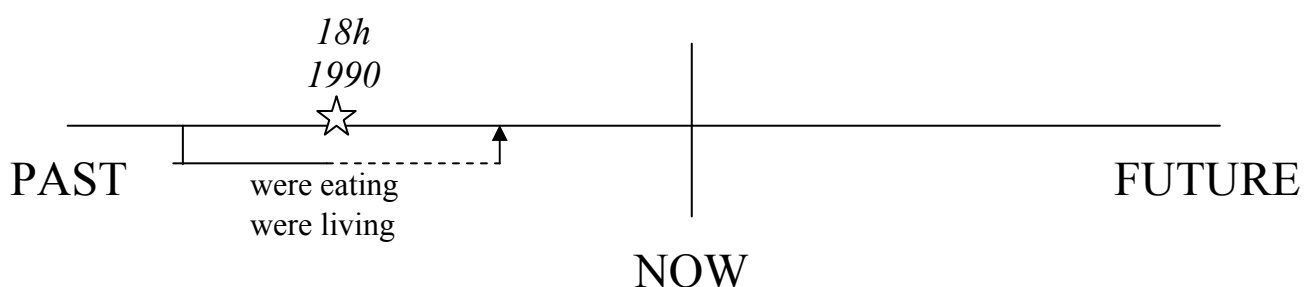
Emily Dickinson lived in the nineteenth century.
She wrote more than a thousand poems.
She was a poet.

- II. The simple past is often used with time expressions that refer to the past such as *last week, 1886, 100 years ago, in the nineteenth century*.

She lived in the nineteenth century. She died more than 100 years ago.
It was in 1886.

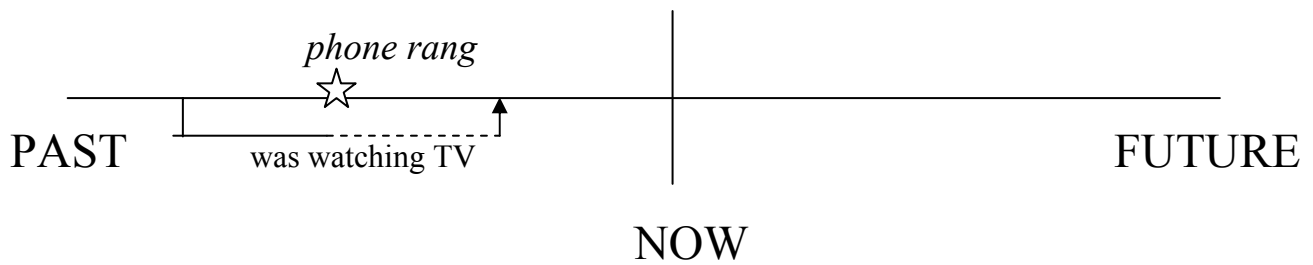
PAST PROGRESSIVE

- I. Describes a COMPLETED action that was IN PROGRESS at a specific time in the past. The action began before the specific time and may or may not continue after that specific time.



Patrick and Christian were eating dinner at six o'clock.
My wife and I were living on tenth street in 1990.

- II. Use the past progressive with the simple past to talk about an action that was INTERRUPTED by another action. The simple past refers to the action BEING INTERRUPTED & the past progressive refers to the INTERRUPTING action. Use *WHEN* to introduce the simple past-tense action.

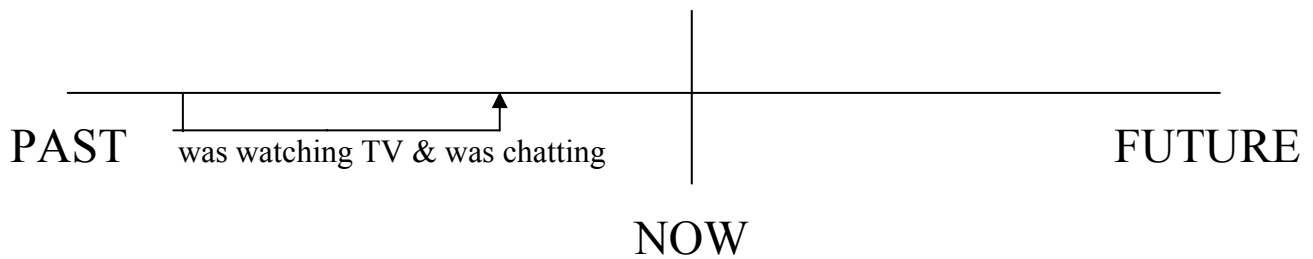


I was watching TV when the phone rang.

or

When the phone rang, I was watching TV.

III. Use the past perfect progressive with WHILE or WHEN to talk about two actions IN PROGRESS at the same time in the past.



While Christian was watching TV, Patrick was chatting on the computer.

or

Patrick was chatting on the computer while Christian was watching TV.

IV. Use the past progressive to focus on the DURATION of an action, NOT its COMPLETION!!!

Paul was reading a book last night. (We don't know if he finished the book)

Paul read a book last night. (He probably finished the book)

NOTE: BE CAREFUL!!!! NON-ACTION (stative) verbs are NOT usually used in the progressive

I had a headache last night.

~~I was having a headache last night.~~