



Just as dinner was ready...

Past simple and past continuous · A2-B1 · Work on your own. Key on page 2.

1 Complete the story

Use the past continuous for 1-2 and the past simple for 3-4.

LEO • MESSAGE TO A FRIEND

Dinner was nearly ready!

1. I _____ the table. (lay)
2. My sister _____ the soup. (stir)
3. Suddenly, someone _____ on the door. (knock)
4. I _____ it and saw our neighbours. (open)

They had brought a cake!

2 Match the scene and event

Write a, b or c. Use each ending once.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 5. I was washing the plates ____ | a. when it started to rain. |
| 6. We were eating outside ____ | b. when she found the key. |
| 7. Sara was looking for a spoon ____ | c. when I dropped one. |

3 Rebuild the question

Put all the word groups in order. Add punctuation.

8. when / what / were you doing / the phone rang
-

4 Make a tiny story

Write two sentences on the back. You can invent what happened.

At seven, I was... / Suddenly, ...

Use the past continuous for the scene and the past simple for the new event.



Check the scene and event

The past continuous sets the scene. The past simple tells us what happened.

1 Complete the story

1. was laying · I was laying the table.
2. was stirring · My sister was stirring the soup.
3. knocked · Suddenly, someone knocked on the door.
4. opened · I opened it and saw our neighbours.

2 Match the scene and event

- 5 → c I was washing the plates when I dropped one.
- 6 → a We were eating outside when it started to rain.
- 7 → b Sara was looking for a spoon when she found the key.

3 Rebuild the question

8. What were you doing when the phone rang?
Also correct: When the phone rang, what were you doing?

4 Your story: one possible answer

At seven, I was making dinner. Suddenly, the lights went out.
Your story can be different. Check was/were + -ing and the past form.