

Past progressive

> The past progressive is a past tense which emphasizes the ongoing nature of the action described.

WAS/WERE + Verb – ING

I **was working**.

He **was eating** his dinner when the phone rang.

The cat **was meowing** last night while we tried to sleep.

> If an idea could be expressed with the expression "was in the process of doing" or with "was in the midst of doing," the past progressive will be more appropriate than the simple past. Consequently, **verbs indicating belief, emotion, possession, etc., are rarely conjugated in the past progressive:**

I **thought** that was right. ["I was in the process of thinking..." would be awkward.]

Cheryl **owned** her own house. ["Cheryl was in the midst of owning..." would be awkward.]

> **Note:** Do not use the past progressive in order to describe habitual actions in the past.

TEST

Simple past or past progressive?

1. I _____ (do) my homework when Peter _____ (arrive).
2. When _____ (go) to the disco, we _____ (see) a car accident.
3. When they _____ (sleep), they _____ (hear) a big noise.

ANSWERS 1. I was doing my homework when Peter arrived. 2. When we were going to the disco, we saw a car accident. 3. When they were sleeping, they heard a big noise.