RULE SHEET

# Past progressive: was / were + -ing



Use the **past progressive** for an action **in progress** at a time in the past: At eight o'clock yesterday, I **was having** dinner. Form: **was / were + verb-ing**. -ing spelling: swim → swim**ming**, make → mak**ing**, lie → l**ying**.

## Positive, negative, question

| | positive | negative | question and short answer |
|---|---|---|---|
| I / he / she / it | I **was reading**. | She **wasn't reading**. | **Was** he **reading**? – Yes, he **was**. |
| you / we / they | They **were playing**. | We **weren't playing**. | **Were** you **playing**? – No, I **wasn't**. |

## when and while

- **when** + short action: I **was walking** home **when** it **started** to rain.
- **while** + long action: The phone **rang while** I **was having** a shower.
- two long actions: **While** Dad **was cooking**, Mum **was washing** the car.
- questions: **What were** you **doing** at six? – I **was doing** my homework.

**Careful!** The **short action** is in the **simple past**: The doorbell **rang** while we **were having** lunch. Not: The doorbell was ringing while we had lunch. · Verbs like **know, like, want** are not in the progressive: I **knew** the answer. Not: I was knowing the answer.

PRACTICE 1

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

# was or were?

## 1 Write was or were.

**Example:** At 7 pm, I _____ watching TV. → *was*

1. My parents _____ cooking dinner.
2. It _____ raining all morning.
3. We _____ waiting for the bus.
4. Ben _____ playing chess with his grandpa.
5. You _____ talking to Mr Khan.
6. The dog _____ sleeping in the sun.

## 2 Tick the correct form.

1. At midnight, I _____. ○ was sleeping ○ were sleeping
2. The girls _____ a song. ○ was singing ○ were singing
3. My cat _____ with a ball. ○ was playing ○ were playing
4. You _____ very fast. ○ was running ○ were running
5. Mum and I _____ the kitchen. ○ was cleaning ○ were cleaning
6. Tom _____ a letter. ○ was writing ○ were writing