



Talking about the continuous past

The tense of a verb tells us **when** the action was done. The action can be done in the past, present or future.

When to use the past tense

There are many ways of talking about the past in English, but the two main ones are: the simple past and the continuous past. The continuous past is explained here*

Use the continuous-past form of a verb when you want to talk about a long action that carried on in the past. The continuous past is often used to describe what people were doing when something else happened. For example:

*I **was kicking** the ball when Dave broke his arm.
He **was walking** the dog when I saw George.*

The continuous past is made by having '**was**' or '**were**' + the verb + **-ing**. For example:

I he she it	was	working hard
you we they	were	working hard

***For more information about the simple past, see the factsheet 'Talking about the simple past'.**