

SESSION 4

PAST CONTINUOUS AND PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS IN CONVERSATIONS

I. CONTENTS:

1. Past Continuous vs. Simple Past.
2. Present Perfect Continuous.

II. OBJECTIVES:

At the end of the class, students:

- Will identify the past continuous, as well as the present perfect continuous in conversations with grammatically correct structure and clear expression.
- Will recognize the basic components of the continuous tenses.
- Will state the essential components to form the perfect tenses.
- Will exemplify in a conversation the use of present perfect continuous, simple past and past continuous.

III. DISCUSSION:

Discuss the questions with your teacher and choose the most important ideas.

- What is the difference between these phrases that: “yo jugué fútbol” and “ yo estuve jugando fútbol”?
- In Spanish, how do you express those actions that began in the past and still continue in the present?
- What is the auxiliary in Spanish to form these tenses? Is it the same in English?

IV. INFORMATIONAL AND FORMATIVE TEXT

1.1. Past continuous tense vs. Simple Past.

The simple past and the past continuous tenses, both refer to actions that were completed in the past. Most of the times when express those actions, we use the simple past. This is the most common way of stating past actions. Examples: Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin. Ronald graduated from college last week. I opened the restaurant late today. Mexico won the Sub-17 World Soccer Cup.

The past continuous is used only when you want to express that the action went on for a certain period of time. Examples: We were waiting for you all afternoon. They were trying to fix the walls but they couldn't do it. Mary was thinking about our next trip all day. Were you living in San Diego while you were in college?

We can use the two forms in the same sentence to talk about two actions that happened at the same time, one of which actions affected the other. The past continuous is used for the action that was affected, and the simple past for the action that affected the other one. Examples: Rosie was driving when she remembered about her job interview. The Smiths were attending a conference when their daughter called to say she had an accident. Joe was walking down the street when a car crashed in front of him. You were waiting inside your car when the rain stopped.

Now let's see each one. Past Continuous. The grammar form is -was/were + present participle. Examples:

Positive	Negative	Question
I was singing. You were singing. He was singing. She was singing. It was singing. We were singing.	I was not singing. You were not singing. He was not singing. She was not singing. It was not singing. We were not singing.	Was I singing? Were you singing? Was he singing? Was she singing? Was it singing? Were we singing?

You were singing They were singing.	You were not singing They were not singing	Were you singing? Were they singing?
--	---	---

The uses of the Past Continuous are: 0.

1. Interrupted Action in the Past.



Use the Past Continuous to indicate that a longer action in the past was interrupted. The interruption is usually a shorter action in the Simple Past. Remember this can be a real interruption or just an interruption in time. Examples: I was watching TV when she called. When the phone rang, she was writing a letter. While we were having the picnic, it started to rain. What were you doing when the earthquake started? I was listening to my cell phone, so I didn't hear the fire alarm. You were not listening to me when I told you to turn the light off. While Pedro was sleeping last night, someone stole his car. Samuel was waiting for us when we got off the bus. While I was writing the lesson, the computer suddenly went off.
A: What were you doing when you broke your leg? B: I was snowboarding.

2. Specific Time as an Interruption.



In the number 1, described above, the Past Continuous is interrupted by a shorter action in the Simple Past. However, you can also use a specific time instead of an interruption. Examples: Last night at 7 PM, I was eating dinner. At midnight, we were still driving through the desert. Yesterday at this time, I was sitting at my desk at work. Note: In the Simple Past, a specific time is used to show when an action happened. In the Past Continuous, a specific time only interrupts the action. Examples: Last night at 7 pm, I ate dinner. I started eating at 7 pm. Last night at 7 pm, I was eating dinner. I started earlier; and at 7 PM, I was in the process of eating dinner

3. Parallel Actions.



When you use the Past Continuous with two actions in the same sentence, it expresses the idea that both actions were happening at the same time. The actions are parallel. Examples: I was studying while she was making dinner. While Rosa was reading, Timoteo was watching television. Were you listening while she was talking? I wasn't paying attention while I was writing the letter, so I made several mistakes. What were you doing while you were waiting? Cesar wasn't working, and I wasn't working either. They were eating dinner, discussing their plans, and having a good time.

4. Atmosphere.

In English, we often use a series of parallel actions to describe the atmosphere at a particular time in the past. Example: When I walked into the office, several people were busily typing, some were talking on the phones, the boss was yelling directions, and customers were waiting to be helped. One customer was yelling at a secretary and waving his hands. Others were complaining to each other about the bad service.

5. Repetition and Irritation with *always*.



The Past Continuous with words such as *always* or *constantly* expresses the idea that something irritating or shocking often happened in the past. The concept is very similar to the expression *used to* but with negative emotion.

Remember to put the words *always* or *constantly* between *be* and verb in ing form. Examples: He was always coming to class late. She was constantly talking. She annoyed everyone. You didn't

like them because they were always complaining. While vs. When: Clauses are groups of words which have meaning, but are often not complete sentences.

Some clauses begin with the word when such as when she called or when it bit me. Other clauses begin with while such as while she was sleeping and while he was surfing. When you talk about things in the past, when is most often followed by the verb tense Simple Past, whereas while is usually followed by Past Continuous. While expresses the idea of during that time. Study the examples below. They have similar meanings, but they emphasize different parts of the sentence. Examples: I was studying when she called. While I was studying, she called.

The uses of the Simple Past are: The Simple Past Forms verb + ed or irregular verbs. Examples: Most verbs conjugate by adding -ed like the verb wait below.

Positive	Negative	Question
I waited.	I did not wait.	Did I wait?
You waited.	You did not wait.	Did you wait?
He waited.	He did not wait.	Did he wait?
She waited.	She did not wait.	Did she wait?
It waited.	It did not wait.	Did it wait?
We waited.	We did not wait.	Did we wait?
You waited.	You did not wait.	Did you wait?
They waited.	They did not wait.	Did they wait?

A. Irregular Verbs. Many verbs, such as have, take irregular forms in the Simple Past. Notice that you only use the irregular verbs in statements. In negative forms and questions, did indicate Simple Past.

Positive	Negative	Question
I had.	I did not have.	Did I have?
You had.	You did not have.	Did you have?
He had.	He did not have.	Did he have?
She had.	She did not have.	Did she have?
It had.	It did not have.	Did it have?
We had.	We did not have.	Did we have?
You had.	You did not have.	Did you have?
They had.	They did not have.	Did they have?

B. To Be. The verb be is also irregular in the Simple Past. Unlike other irregular verbs, there are two Simple Past forms: was and were. It also has different question forms and negative forms. Always remember that you do not use did with the verb be in the Simple Past.

Positive	Negative	Question
I was.	I was not.	Was I?
You were.	You were not.	Were you?
He was.	He was not.	Was he?
She was.	She was not.	Was she?
It was.	It was not.	Was it?
We were.	We were not.	Were we?
You were.	You were not.	Were you?
They were.	They were not.	Were they?

Modal verbs behave very strangely in the Simple Past. The most important verb to remember is must. Notice how it becomes had to in the Simple Past. Must, becomes had to: I must call my wife now. I had to call my wife yesterday.

1. Completed Action in the Past.



Use the Simple Past to express the idea that an action started and finished at a specific time in the past. Sometimes, the speaker may not actually mention the specific time, but they do have one specific time in mind. Examples: I saw a movie last Monday. I didn't see a game yesterday. Last year, I traveled to Brazil. Last year, I didn't travel to Argentina. Did you have meeting last night? He washed his car. She didn't wash her car.

2. A Series of Completed Actions.



We use the Simple Past to list a series of completed actions in the past. These actions happen 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and so on. Examples: I finished playing, walked to downtown, and found a nice place to eat. He arrived from the mall at 9:00, checked into the hotel at 10:00, and met the others at 10:30. Did you add flour, pour in the milk, and then add the eggs?

3. Duration in Past.



The Simple Past can be used with a duration which starts and stops in the past. Duration implies a time period often indicated by expressions such as: for two years, for five minutes, all day, and all year. Examples: I lived in Venezuela for two years. Irma studied Portuguese for five years. They sat at the river all day. They did not stay at the game the whole time. We talked on the phone for twenty minutes. A: How long did you wait for her? B: We waited for two hours.

4. Habits in the Past.



The Simple Past can also be used to describe a habit which stopped in the past. It can have the same meaning as used to. To make it clear that we are talking about a habit, we often add expressions such as: always, often, usually, never, when I was a child, when I was younger. Examples: I studied Spanish when I was a child. He played the guitar. He didn't play the piano. Did you play a musical instrument when you were a kid? She worked at the movie theater after school. They never went to school, they always skipped class.

5. Past Facts or Generalizations.



The Simple Past can also be used to describe past facts or generalizations which are no longer true. As in the number 4 above, this use of the Simple Past is quite similar to the expression used to. Examples: She was shy as a child, but now she is very outgoing. He didn't like onions before. Did you live in Sonora when you were a kid? People paid much more to make cell phone calls in the past.

2.1. Present perfect Continuous

The structure of the Present Perfect Continuous is **have/has + been + present participle**.

Positive	Negative	Question
I have been sleeping. You have been sleeping. He has been sleeping. She has been sleeping.	I have not been sleeping. You have not been sleeping. He has not been sleeping. She has not been sleeping.	Have I been sleeping? Have you been sleeping? Has he been sleeping? Has she been sleeping?

It has been sleeping. We have been sleeping. You have been sleeping. They have been sleeping.	It has not been sleeping. We have not been sleeping. You have not been sleeping. They have not been sleeping.	Has it been sleeping? Have we been sleeping? Have you been sleeping? Have they been sleeping?
--	--	--

The uses of the Present Perfect Continuous are: 1. Duration from the Past until Now.

Past	Present	Future
------	---------	--------

We use the Present Perfect Continuous to show that something started in the past and has continued up until now. For five minutes, for two weeks, and since Tuesday are all durations which can be used with the Present Perfect Continuous. Examples: We have been talking for the last hour. He has been working at that company for four years. What have you been doing for the last 20 minutes? Jaime has been teaching at the university since May. We have been waiting here for over three hours! Why has Tania not been taking her medicine for the last two days?

2. Recently, Lately.

Past	Present	Future
------	---------	--------

You can also use the Present Perfect Continuous without duration such as for two weeks. Without the duration, the tense has a more general meaning of lately. We often use the words lately or recently to emphasize this meaning. Examples: Recently, You have been feeling really happy. He has been watching too many movies lately. Have they been working lately? Lola has been feeling a little depressed. Carmen has not been practicing her English. What have they been doing?

Reworking the use of the Present Perfect Continuous Tense?

This tense is called the present perfect continuous tense. There is usually a connection with the present or now. There are basically two uses for the present perfect continuous tense:

1. An action that has just stopped or recently stopped. We use the present perfect continuous tense to talk about an action that started in the past and stopped recently. There is usually a result now. Example: She's tired –now- because She has been running. Why are the plants wet –now-? Has it been snowing? You don't understand *now* because you haven't been listening.

2. An action continuing up to now. We use the present perfect continuous tense to talk about an action that started in the past and is continuing now. This is often used with *for* or *since*. I have been reading for 1 hour. -I am still reading now. - We've been studying since 5 o'clock. -We're still studying now. - How long have you been learning Japanese? -You are still learning now. - We have not been drinking. -And we are not drinking now.-

For and Since with Present Perfect Continuous Tense

We often use for and since with the present perfect tense. We use for to talk about a period of time - 3 minutes, 5 weeks, 7 years. We use since to talk about an action that started at a point in past time - 11 o'clock, 1st March, Wednesday.

For is a period of time: 10 minutes, three days, 3 months, 2 years, 3 centuries, a long time, ever. Since is a point in past time: 7:15 pm, Monday, February, 1995, 1600, I left university, the beginning of the show.

Here are some examples:

I have been studying <u>for</u> 4 hours.	I have been watching TV <u>since</u> 9pm.
Teresa hasn't been feeling well <u>for</u> 4 weeks.	Sandra hasn't been working <u>since</u> April.
He has been playing tennis <u>for</u> a long time.	He has been living in Panama <u>since</u> he left school.