**PAST CONTINUOUS VERSUS PAST SIMPLE**

**PAST CONTINUOUS**

The most common use of the **past continuous** tense is to talk about something that was happening around a particulartime in the past. It is used for backgound action or description.

*What were you doing at 8 o’clock last night? I was watching television.*

*In 1994 he was working in a small town in Poland.*

*At 6 o’clock on Saturday morning we were travelling to the airport.*

The **past continuous** describes ‘situations’ that go on for some time**;** longer background actions or situations.

When they arrived, Jeff was cooking dinner. (Jeff started cooking before they arrived.)

We often use while with the past continuous.

While he was having dinner, he got a great idea.

**PAST SIMPLE**

The **past simple** is used to describe actions and events that happened at a particular moment. Often, the ‘action’ described by the **past simple** tense interrupts the ‘situation’ described by the **past continuous** tense. The **past simple** usually describes ‘actions’ that happen quickly, short actions.

*I went home early yesterday.*

*While he was skiing, he broke his leg.*

*When my mum came into the room, I was kissing my girlfriend.*

*As they were getting near the earth, four of the spaceships caught fire.*

When is often followed by the past simple.

When the Phone rang, I was writing an email.

**They were driving to London, >>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>**↑↑↑**>>>>>>>> when their car broke down.**

**PAST SIMPLE: interrupts a situation**

**quick/short actions**

**when**

**PAST CONTINOUS: background action/description**

**longer action**

**while**

**Be careful! Some verbs are not normally used in the continuous form, they are used in the simple form:**

Love, hate, prefer, like, dislike, want, wish, hope, regret, mind, understand, think, believe, doubt, know, feel (=think), remember, forget, recognise, seem, look (=resemble), mean, weigh, be (in most cases), have (possess),feel (perception=waarneming), hear, smell (perception), taste (perception), see (perception)

*I knew that he wanted to marry her.*

*When we met, he didn’t recognise me.*

*I heard her, while I was trying to get inside the house.*