

THE PAST CONTINUOUS TENSE

(I was doing)

 Look at these sentences :

(Muslims generally perform the Pilgrimage rituals between the 9th and the 12th of Dhul-Hijjah every year).

1. On the 9th of Dhul-Hijjah last year, pilgrims were staying at 'Arafat. They were praying Dhuhr and 'Asr, combined, in Namirah Mosque. At night, they were staying at Muzdalifah.
2. On Dhul-Hijjah 10th, they were stoning Iblis. Later on, they were slaughtering their offerings for the sake of Allah.

The underlined verb forms are in the Past Continuous Tense. We use this tense to denote an action continuing at a specific point in the past, while not stating when it began or finished.

We also use this tense to denote an action continuing in the past but interrupted by another action; e.g.

- * When the phone rang, I was seeing off my guests.
- * The lights went out while we were listening to the news bulletin.

Exercise 12

Complete the following sentences, using the Past Continuous Tense:

1. They started reciting the Holy Qur'an at 6.00, after Dawn Prayer. They finished reciting the Holy Qur'an at 7.30. At 6.40, they
2. The appointed Committee started interviewing the applicants at 8.00. It finished interviewing the applicants at 12.00. At 10.00, the Committee
3. The psychiatrist started listening to the patient at 10.15. At 11.10, he finished listening to the patient. At 10.30, the psychiatrist

Exercise 13

Put the verb in parentheses into the correct form, using the Simple Past or the Past Continuous Tense :

1. The real estate agent (talk) to customer when the owner of the house entered.
2. While I (look) for a book in the University Library, I (come) across a very valuable reference on Historical Linguistics.
3. Multitudes of spectators (look) up at the spaceship when it suddenly (explode).
4. I (travel) on the Underground when, much to my pleasure, I (run) into an old schoolfriend.
5. What you (do) at this time yesterday?
6. The reckless driver (drive) too fast when the accident (happen).
7. The phone (ring) when I (have) a shower.

Insert the correct tense of the verbs in parentheses, either the Simple Past or Past Continuous :

One morning, only a few days after 'Umar had passed his driving test, he (decide) to drive into town. When he (come) to the first traffic lights, they just (change) from amber to red. So 'Umar (stop) the car sharply. Unfortunately, the engine (stall) and when the lights (change) to green again, he couldn't get the car going! The ignition key had jammed! It was a busy street. He (look) in his rear mirror and (see) that a long queue of cars quickly (form) behind him! The driver directly behind him (blow) his horn angrily! A policeman (stand) on the street corner and he (look) to see what all the noise was about! He (wave on) the cars to overtake 'Umar, who now (feel) rather embarrassed!