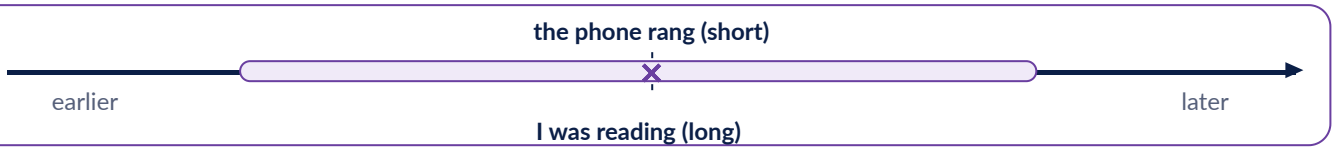
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FREE GRAMMAR PRACTICE · PRIMARY 4–6

When or While?

A long action and a short action at the same time



Word	Goes with	Example
while	the longer action; often two things at the same time	**While** I was reading, the phone rang.
when	often the shorter event (simple past)	I was reading **when** the phone rang.

Use the **past continuous** for an action already in progress. Both *when* and *while* can introduce a longer action.

PART A Choose

Use the past continuous for the action already in progress and the simple past for the shorter event. Tick (✓) the correct answer.

1. Amy was cooking (☐ when ☐ while) the lights went out.
2. While we (☐ walked ☐ were walking) home, it started to rain.
3. Ben was running (☐ when ☐ while) he fell over.
4. While Dad (☐ washed ☐ was washing) the car, the dog ran away.

PART B Fill in

Fill in the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. While Tom _____ (watch) TV, his sister _____ (come) home.
2. I _____ (see) a rainbow while I _____ (ride) my bike.
3. When the teacher _____ (walk) in, the children _____ (talk). They had already started.

PART C Join

Join the two sentences with the word in brackets.

1. Paul was playing the violin. A string broke. (when)

_____

Answers **A** 1 when · 2 were walking · 3 when · 4 was washing **B** 1 was watching; came · 2 saw; was riding · 3 walked; were talking **C** 1 Paul was playing the violin when a string broke.
C1 also correct: When a string broke, Paul was playing the violin.

Want more practice? When or While? (Primary) has short notes, many more exercises and an answer key. **myenglishtutorhk.com**

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