



DRAWING CONCEPTS

Learners draw pictures to show conceptual differences between the Simple Past and the Past Continuous

Level:	Pre-Intermediate - Intermediate
Target Audience:	Secondary, Adults
Language / Skills Focus:	Simple Past and Past Continuous
Time:	20 - 30 minutes
Materials:	One copy of the worksheet cut into pairs of sentences

IN CLASS

- 1 After having presented the difference between the Simple Past and Past Continuous, pair learners and give each a pair of contrasting sentences.
- 2 Explain that each pair have a few minutes to draw a picture for each sentence, showing the concept expressed in each. Reassure learners that they need no artistic talent to do this - simple stick figures and line drawings will be fine.
- 3 When they have finished, ask pairs to display their drawings on the walls or on desktops. Below each drawing, they should place the sentence it relates to.
- 4 Tell all your learners to look at the work produced by other pairs.
- 5 Finally, with the whole class together, discuss their drawings and matching sentences. Here, you should focus on concept and meaning using the pictures as a visual reference. Ensure that any non-matching pictures and sentences are fully discussed.

COMMENT

Many exercises found in grammar practice books and course books are unhelpful in bringing out the conceptual difference between the Simple Past and the Past Continuous. Too often, with a little imagination, either tense could be used. Without checking the concept intended in each sentence with our learners, we cannot be sure what they have understood. In effect, their mental, visual representation of a sentence may not match the concept expressed in the sentence. This activity helps to clarify the different concepts of these two tenses through a visual representation. This adds an extra, tangible dimension and can be a powerful aid to understanding.

Paul Sanderson has been an EFL teacher, trainer and writer since 1978 and has worked in several European countries. His publications include *Using Newspapers in the Classroom 1999 (CUP)*. He is Content Editor for e-mesh Ltd.



DRAWING CONCEPTS

I arrived at the party and everyone left.

I arrived at the party and everyone was leaving.

I spoke to him when he left the room.

I spoke to him when he was leaving the room.

He crossed the road when a car hit him.

He was crossing the road when a car hit him.

I left the house and the sun shone.

I left the house and the sun was shining.

He walked across the bridge when his hat blew off.

He was walking across the bridge when his hat blew off.

My friends were singing 'Happy Birthday' when I came into the room.

My friends sang 'Happy Birthday' when I came in the room.

I had dinner when the lights went out.

I was having dinner when the lights went out.

When the phone rang, I was having a bath.

When the phone rang, I had a bath.

He smoked four cigarettes this morning at breakfast.

He was smoking four cigarettes this morning at breakfast.