

Past simple

To talk about a completed action in the past.
I reviewed the production report yesterday.

To emphasise that an action is completed.
I worked for a temporary agency in the summer.

To talk about actions that follow other actions in the past.
When I finally arrived at the factory I went to the reception.

To talk about an activity that happens regularly in the past.
I ate my lunch every day in the canteen last year.

Past continuous

To talk about an action that was in progress in the past especially when another action interrupts it.
I was meeting the production team when the engineer arrived.

Emphasis the duration of the action.
I was working on the project all summer.

To talk about actions that continued at the same time.
I was looking for my boarding pass while I was walking to the gate.

To talk about actions around a specific point of time in the past.
At 6.00am yesterday I was sleeping.

To create the context for a scene, for example in a novel or film.
It was raining as the man looked at the desolate landscape around him.