

English Ladder

Student Workbook

Grammar Concepts: "While" and "During"

A polished self-study handout designed for print or tablet use. Read the concept, notice the pattern, and then complete the matching practice set on your own.



Grammar Concepts #04

Key Points

Visual anchor

Use the concept poster to spotlight the main language pattern in **Grammar Concepts: "While" and "During"** and keep the explanation visible during practice and discussion.

ENGLISH LADDER Concept #04 ► **While & During**

- We generally use **while** before an **-ing** verb.
- We generally use **during** before a noun phrase.

- I fell asleep **while** listening to the band.
- I fell asleep **during** the concert.
- I ate a lot **while** celebrating Christmas.
- I ate a lot **during** Christmas.
- I saw a shark **while** surfing.
- I saw a shark **during** my surfing adventure.
- I read a book **while** waiting for Tom.
- I read a book **during** my wait for Tom.
- I ate sushi **while** visiting Tokyo.
- I ate sushi **during** my trip to Tokyo.

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Core Idea

In English, "while" and "during" are used to express actions or events happening simultaneously with another action or event. However, they are used in different contexts and follow different grammatical rules.

Quick reference

Using "While"	While + subject + -ing verb + object
Using "While"	I fell asleep while listening to the band. The action of falling asleep happens simultaneously with the action of listening to the band.
Using "During"	During + noun phrase
Using "During"	I fell asleep during the concert. The action of falling asleep happens within the time frame of the concert.
Comparison of "While" and "During"	While: I ate a lot while celebrating Christmas. During: I ate a lot during Christmas. In the first sentence, "celebrating Christmas" is an action, and "while" introduces the simultaneous action of eating. In the second sentence, "Christmas" is a noun phrase indicating the time period in which the eating happened.

Key Points

Using "While"

"While" is generally used before an -ing verb (the present participle form). It introduces a subordinate clause that describes an action happening at the same time as another action.

Structure:

- While + subject + -ing verb + object

Examples:

- I fell asleep while listening to the band. The action of falling asleep happens simultaneously with the action of listening to the band.
- She cooked dinner while talking on the phone. Cooking dinner and talking on the phone are happening at the same time.



- He was reading a book while waiting for the bus. Reading the book and waiting for the bus occur concurrently.
- They were playing soccer while it was raining. Playing soccer and raining happen together.
- We were watching TV while eating dinner. Watching TV and eating dinner occur at the same time.

Using "During"

"During" is used before a noun phrase. It indicates that something happens within the time frame of a particular event or period.

Structure:

- During + noun phrase

Examples:

- I fell asleep during the concert. The action of falling asleep happens within the time frame of the concert.
- She felt nervous during the exam. Feeling nervous occurs within the time frame of the exam.
- He traveled to several countries during his vacation. Traveling to several countries happens within the period of his vacation.
- They stayed indoors during the storm. Staying indoors happens within the period of the storm.
- We took many photos during our trip to Paris. Taking many photos occurs within the time frame of the trip to Paris.

Comparison of "While" and "During"

To highlight the differences between "while" and "during", let's look at pairs of sentences where both can be used to describe similar situations:

- While: I ate a lot while celebrating Christmas. During: I ate a lot during Christmas. In the first sentence, "celebrating Christmas" is an action, and "while" introduces the simultaneous action of eating. In the second sentence, "Christmas" is a noun phrase indicating the time period in which the eating happened.
- While: I saw a shark while surfing. During: I saw a shark during my surfing adventure. In the first sentence, "surfing" is an action happening simultaneously with seeing the shark. In the second sentence, "my surfing adventure" is a noun phrase indicating the period in which the shark was seen.
- While: I read a book while waiting for Tom. During: I read a book during my wait for Tom. "Waiting for Tom" in the first sentence is an action concurrent with reading the book, while "my wait for Tom" in the second sentence is a noun phrase indicating the time period of reading.
- While: I ate sushi while visiting Tokyo. During: I ate sushi during my trip to Tokyo. "Visiting Tokyo" is an action occurring at the same time as eating sushi, whereas "my trip to Tokyo" is a noun phrase indicating the period when the sushi was eaten.

By understanding and practicing these structures, non-native English speakers can accurately describe simultaneous actions and events, enhancing their communication skills in English.





Practice Check

Answer the quiz questions below with either "while" or "during" based on the grammar concepts taught on the left.

ITEM 01

I fell asleep ____ listening to the band.

Answer: _____

ITEM 02

I ate a lot ____ Christmas.

Answer: _____

ITEM 03

I saw a shark ____ surfing.

Answer: _____

ITEM 04

I read a book ____ waiting for Tom.

Answer: _____

ITEM 05

I ate sushi ____ my trip to Tokyo.

Answer: _____

ITEM 06

She cooked dinner ____ talking on the phone.

Answer: _____

ITEM 07

He traveled to several countries ____ his vacation.

Answer: _____

ITEM 08

They stayed indoors ____ the storm.

Answer: _____

ITEM 09

We took many photos ____ our trip to Paris.

Answer: _____

ITEM 10

She felt nervous ____ the exam.

Answer: _____



ITEM 11

He was reading a book ____ waiting for the bus.

Answer: _____

ITEM 12

I saw a shark ____ my surfing adventure.

Answer: _____

ITEM 13

I ate a lot ____ celebrating Christmas.

Answer: _____

ITEM 14

They were playing soccer ____ it was raining.

Answer: _____

ITEM 15

She read a book ____ her wait for Tom.

Answer: _____

ITEM 16

I ate sushi ____ visiting Tokyo.

Answer: _____

ITEM 17

I listened to music ____ driving home.

Answer: _____

ITEM 18

We saw many animals ____ our visit to the zoo.

Answer: _____

ITEM 19

He studied hard ____ the semester.

Answer: _____

ITEM 20

She sang ____ taking a shower.

Answer: _____



ITEM 21

He slept ____ the entire flight.

Answer: _____

ITEM 22

I drank coffee ____ working on my project.

Answer: _____

ITEM 23

We talked ____ the entire movie.

Answer: _____

ITEM 24

He was smiling ____ reading the letter.

Answer: _____



Self-check Answer Key

Use the key after you have completed every item on your own.

ITEM 01

I fell asleep while listening to the band.

ITEM 02

I ate a lot during Christmas.

ITEM 03

I saw a shark while surfing.

ITEM 04

I read a book while waiting for Tom.

ITEM 05

I ate sushi during my trip to Tokyo.

ITEM 06

She cooked dinner while talking on the phone.

ITEM 07

He traveled to several countries during his vacation.

ITEM 08

They stayed indoors during the storm.

ITEM 09

We took many photos during our trip to Paris.

ITEM 10

She felt nervous during the exam.

ITEM 11

He was reading a book while waiting for the bus.

ITEM 12

I saw a shark during my surfing adventure.

ITEM 13

I ate a lot while celebrating Christmas.

ITEM 14

They were playing soccer while it was raining.



ITEM 15

She read a book during her wait for Tom.

ITEM 16

I ate sushi while visiting Tokyo.

ITEM 17

I listened to music while driving home.

ITEM 18

We saw many animals during our visit to the zoo.

ITEM 19

He studied hard during the semester.

ITEM 20

She sang while taking a shower.

ITEM 21

He slept during the entire flight.

ITEM 22

I drank coffee while working on my project.

ITEM 23

We talked during the entire movie.

ITEM 24

He was smiling while reading the letter.