

Good and taboo Past Continuous questions

Together rank each question below as:

1. an easy-to-answer normal small talk question which you could ask a stranger
2. a question that you could ask to someone who you know a little such as a colleague, but not to a stranger
3. a question that you could only ask to someone you know well such as an old friend
4. a taboo question that you would never ask anyone

Ask about any questions which you couldn't understand and/ or couldn't rank, discussing their rankings as a class each time, continuing until you have a number of points between one and four next to each. (You don't necessarily have to agree on the points with the teacher or other groups as long as you write something).

Speaking

Take turns asking and answering questions from below, with the person who will answer rolling a dice to decide what kind of question they will answer each time:

1. one-point question
2. two-point question
3. three-point question
4. four-point question
5. free choice (= choose what kind of question you want)
6. free choice

If your teacher tells you to score, you get that many points (e.g. three points if the dice says three) if you answer the question, but no points if you refuse to answer with "I'm afraid...", "I'd rather...", etc.

Past Continuous grammar presentation

What tense are all the questions in? How is it constructed, and what does it mean?

How is it different from Past Simple ("What did you...?")

Freer practice

Write more personal questions with Past Continuous, if possible with all four ranks. Another group will rank your questions, then discuss if you agree with the rankings or not. Then play the same game with the questions which you discussed the rankings of.

1. Did something happen when you were shaving/ getting ready/ doing your make up/...?
2. Have you ever had something stolen? What were you doing when it happened?
3. Have you ever lost something important? What were you doing when it happened?
4. How many emails were waiting in your inbox (the last time that you looked/ opened it)?
5. How was the weather when you (last) went skiing/ to the mountains? (Was it snowing?)
6. How was the weather when you (last) went to the beach? (Was the sun shining?)
7. How were you feeling when you woke up this morning?
8. How were you feeling when you took TOEIC/ Eiken/ this school's level check/ university entrance exams/...?
9. I saw that you had your headphones on. What were you listening to (just now/ when you came in/ when I saw you earlier)?
10. I saw that you were on YouTube/ Netflix/ Amazon Prime/ Disney Plus/.... What were you watching (just now/ when you came in/ when I saw you earlier)?
11. Was it raining when you came in (today/ just now)?
12. Were you following Mad Men/ Breaking Bad/ Game of Thrones/... (when it came out)?
13. Were you following last year's Champions League/ ...League/ ...Cup?
14. Were you looking forward to this season?
15. Were you looking forward to today?
16. Were you looking forward to today's lesson?
17. Were you paying attention when you did your make up/ brushed your hair/ shaved/...?
18. Were you studying in this class at this time last year?
19. Were you suffering from a cold last week? (You didn't look very well.)
20. Were you the one who was smoking in the toilet?
21. Were you the one who was coughing outside? Do you have coronavirus?
22. Were you watching the TV at... (last night/ this morning/ on ...day)? Did you see...?
23. Weren't you listening to me? What were you thinking about instead?
24. Weren't you wearing the same jacket/ clothes/... in the last lesson?
25. What was happening in the world when you were born?
26. What was I saying before you interrupted me? Oh yes, as I was saying...
27. What were you doing at this time last week?
28. What were you doing at this time on your last day off?
29. What were you doing this time last year?
30. What were you doing this time yesterday?
31. What were you doing when the big earthquake/ typhoon/ snowstorm/... hit (in 20...)?
32. What were you doing when you first heard about 9/11/ about...?
33. What were you doing when... won.../ when... beat...?
34. What were you doing when you found your present job?
35. What were you doing when you last met your extended family?
36. What were you doing when you met your husband/ wife/ girlfriend/ boyfriend?
37. What were you thinking about just now? (You had a funny look on your face).
38. What were you thinking when you chose that outfit/ put... together with...?
39. What were you wearing in bed last night?
40. Who were you sitting next to last lesson?