

As (Time and Reason)

A

As (time)

You can use **as** when two things happen at the same time:

- I watched her **as** she opened the letter. (I watched and she opened at the same time.)
- **As** they walked along the street, they looked in the store windows.

Or you can say that something happened **as** you were doing something else (= in the middle of doing something else):

- Jill slipped **as** she was getting off the bus.
- The thief was seen **as** he was climbing over the wall.

In these examples **as** is similar to **while**.

For the *past continuous* (was getting / were going, etc.), see Unit 6.

Often we use **as** when two short actions happen at the same time:

- We all waved good-bye to Liz **as** she drove away in her car. (we waved and she drove away at the same time)
- Turn off the light **as** you go out, please.

But we also use **as** when two things change together over a longer period of time:

- **As** the day went on, the weather got worse.
- I began to enjoy the job more **as** I got used to it.

You can also use **just as** (= exactly at that moment):

- **Just as** I sat down, the phone rang.
- I had to leave **just as** the conversation was getting interesting.

We use **as** only if two things happen at the same time. Use **when** (*not as*) if one thing happens after another:

- **When** I got home, I took a bath. (= not as I got home, but after I got home)
- **As** I walked into the room, the phone started ringing. (= at the same time)

B

As (reason)

As sometimes means "because":

- **As** it was a national holiday, all the banks were closed. (= because it was a national holiday)
- We watched TV all evening **as** we had nothing better to do.

Note that we also use **since** in this way:

- **Since** it was a national holiday, all the banks were closed.

C

We use **as** (time) with actions and happenings (see Section A):

- I watched her **as** she read the letter.

When we use **as** with a situation (not an action), the meaning is usually **because**:

- **As** I was asleep, I didn't hear the bell. (= because I was asleep)
- **As** they live near us, we see them quite often. (= because they live near us)

Compare **while** or **when**:

- The bell rang **while** (*or when*) I was asleep. (*not as* I was asleep)
- They got married **when** (*or while*) they were living in London. (*not as* they were living)

Exercises

112.1 Use *as* to join a sentence from Box A with one from Box B.

- A
1. ~~we all waved good-bye to Liz~~
 2. we all smiled
 3. I burned myself
 4. the crowd cheered
 5. a dog ran out in front of the car

- B
- we were driving along the road
 - I was taking a hot dish out of the oven
 - ~~she drove away in her car~~
 - we posed for the photograph
 - the two teams ran onto the field

1. We all waved good-bye to Liz as she drove away in her car.
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

112.2 Put in *as* or *when*. Sometimes you can use either *as* or *when*.

1. Maria got married when she was 23.
2. My camera was stolen _____ I was on vacation.
3. He dropped the glass _____ he was taking it out of the cupboard.
4. _____ I finished high school, I went into the army.
5. The train slowed down _____ it approached the station.
6. I used to live near the ocean _____ I was a child.

112.3 What does *as* mean in these sentences?

1. As they live near us, we see them pretty often.
2. Jill slipped as she was getting off the bus.
3. As I was tired, I went to bed early.
4. Unfortunately, as I was parking the car, I hit the car behind me.
5. As we climbed the hill, we got more and more tired.
6. We decided to go out to eat as we had no food at home.
7. As we don't use the car very often, we've decided to sell it.

because *at the same time as*

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| _____ ✓ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ ✓ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

Now rewrite the sentences where *as* means *because*. Use *since*.

8. Since they live near us, we see them pretty often.
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____

112.4 Use your own ideas to complete these sentences.

1. I saw you as _____.
2. It began to rain just as _____.
3. As I didn't have enough money for a taxi, _____.
4. Just as I took the photograph, _____.