

The Most Important Tenses of English

In this part of the presentation we are going to discuss the tenses in the **past** time

The tenses for the **past** time are:

Past Simple

Past Continuous

Present Perfect

Past Perfect



We are going to continue discussing the past time tenses with the **Past Continuous** tense.

The Past Continuous

We use the Past Continuous tense when:

- we are talking about the **past** time, and
- we are talking about a **particular** time in the past, or
- we want to emphasize that the action in the past **took some time**.

→ **Yesterday**, at **6 pm** I **was reading** a book.

→ I **was reading** the book **for two hours** yesterday.

The Past Continuous

The verb in the Past Continuous tense has two parts:

was / were ——— and ——— present participle

- It's the Past Simple of the verb 'to be'.
→ I, he, she, it was
→ You, we, they were
- Here, you decide if the sentence is positive, negative or if it is a question.
- It's the verb with **-ing** ending.
→ work + ing = working
→ live**e** + ing = living
→ run + ing = run**ning**
- Here, you decide about the activity.

The Past Continuous

The verb 'read'
positive sentences

Singular

I **was** reading.
You **were** reading.
He **was** reading.
She **was** reading.
It **was** reading.

Plural

We **were** reading.
You **were** reading.
They **were** reading.

The Past Continuous

The verb 'read'

negative sentences

Singular

I **was not** (wasn't) reading.

You **were not** (weren't) reading.

He **was not** (wasn't) reading.

She **was not** (wasn't) reading.

It **was not** (wasn't) reading.

Plural

We **were not** (weren't) reading.

You **were not** (weren't) reading.

They **were not** (weren't) reading.

The Past Continuous

The verb 'read'

questions and short answers

Singular

Was I reading? Yes, I was. /
No, I wasn't.

Were you reading? Yes, you
were. / No, you weren't.

Was he reading? Yes, he was. /
No, he wasn't.

Was she reading? Yes, she
was. / No, she wasn't.


Was it reading? Yes, it was. /
No, it wasn't.

Plural

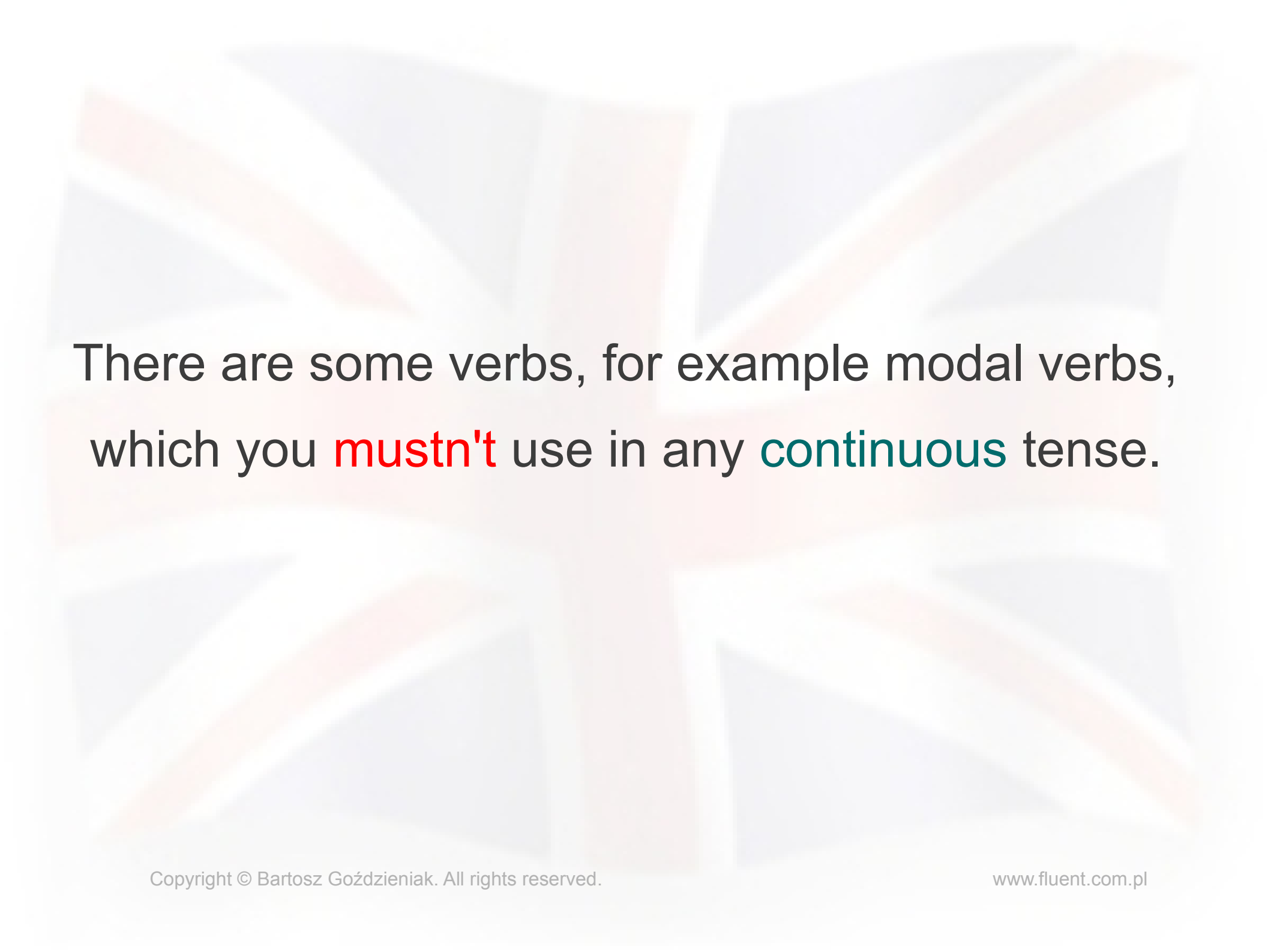
Were we reading? Yes, we
were. / No, we weren't.

Were you reading? Yes, you
were. / No, you weren't.

Were they reading? Yes,
they were. / No, they weren't.



If you put any verb in present participle form instead of 'read', you make **correct** sentences in the **Past Continuous** tense.




There are some verbs, for example modal verbs, which you **mustn't** use in any **continuous** tense.



Let's now consider the **Past Simple** and the **Past Continuous together.**



When we do this we need to remember that **one**
tense talks about **one** action.

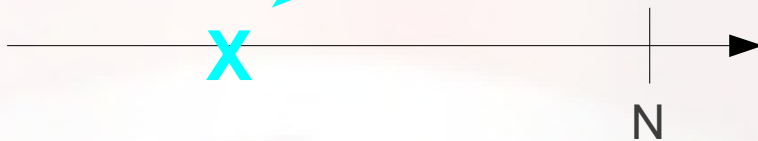


When we put the **Past Simple** and **Past Continuous together**, we need **two** actions in the **past**.

Please compare the actions:

the Past Simple

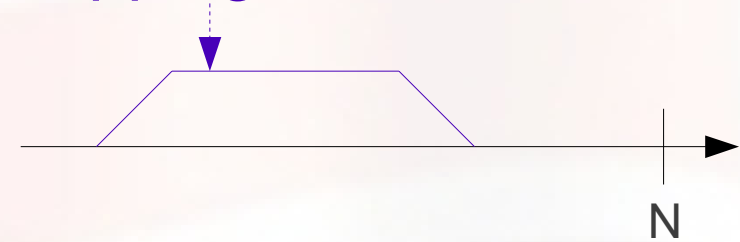
→ Yesterday, I met George.



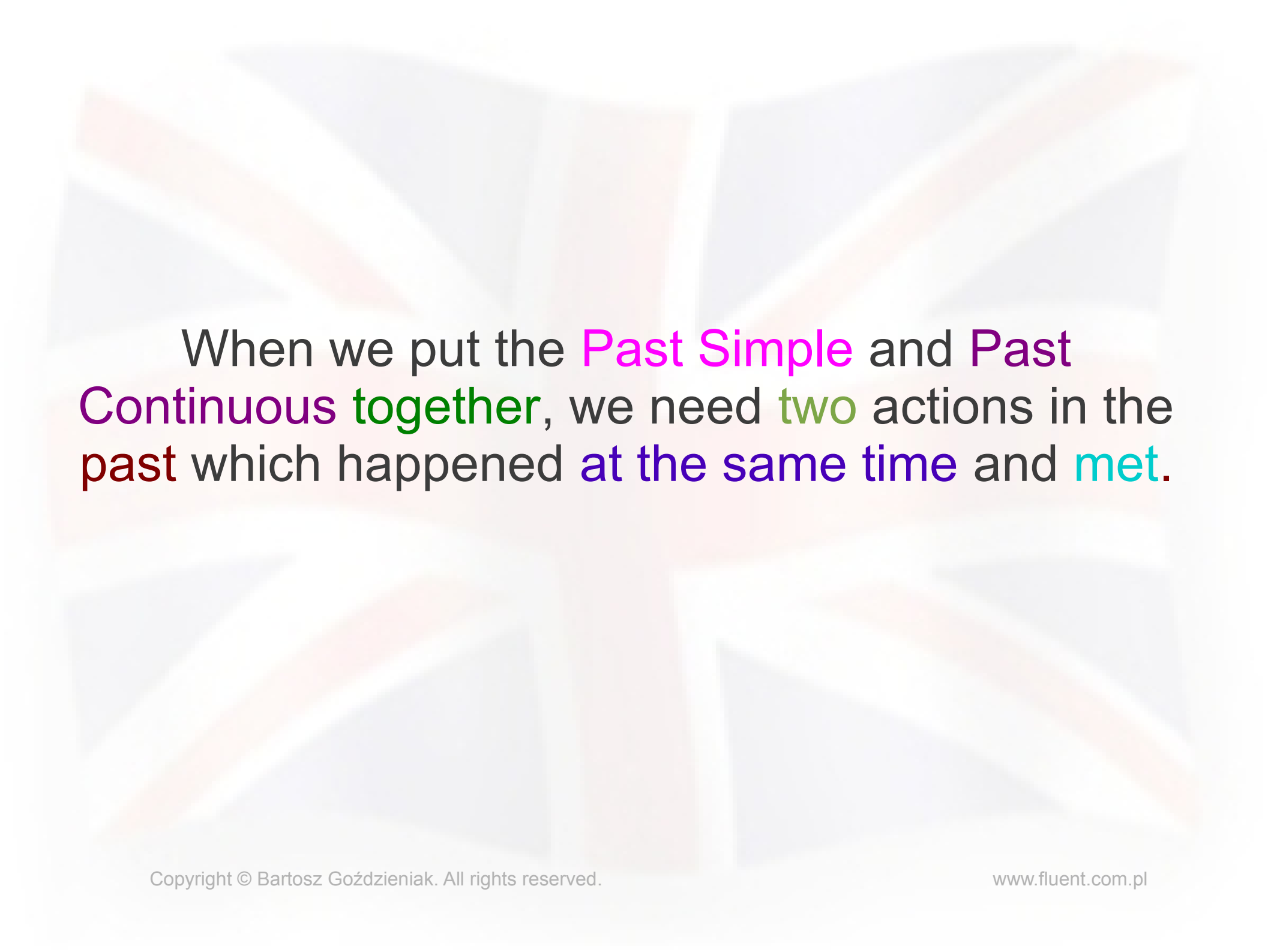
One, **instant** action.

the Past Continuous

→ Yesterday, I was shopping for three hours.

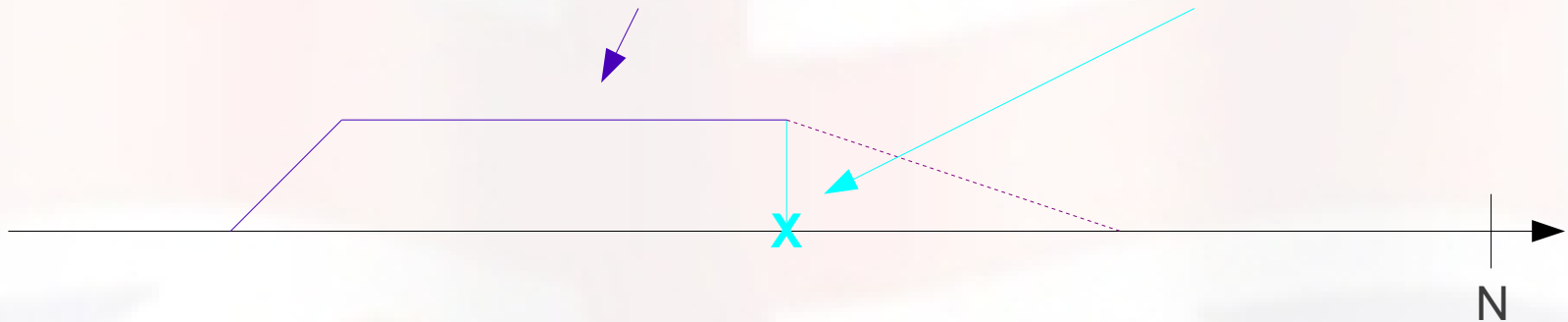



The action **took some time**.



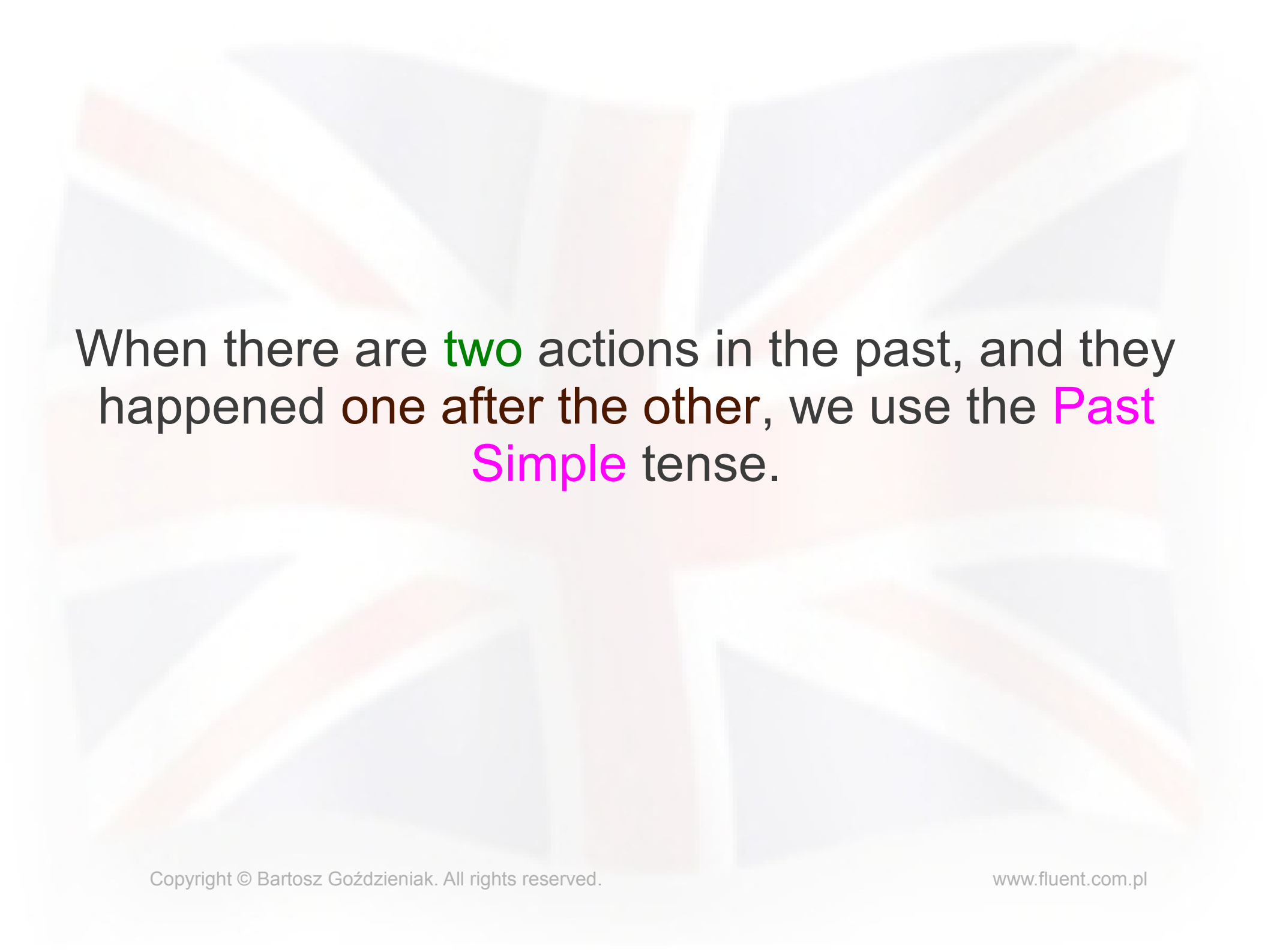
When we put the **Past Simple** and **Past Continuous together**, we need **two** actions in the **past** which happened **at the same time** and **met**.

→ Yesterday, when I was shopping I met George.



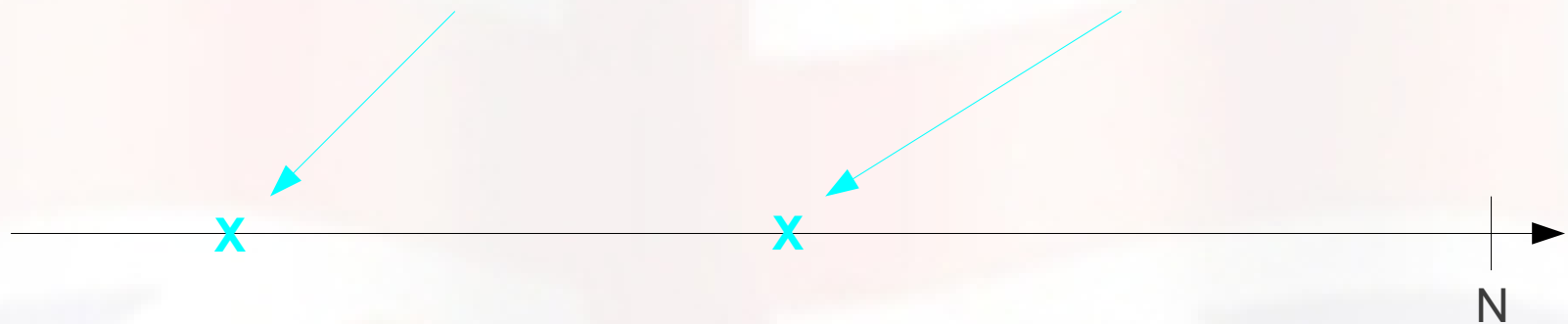


The **Past Simple** action is in the middle of the
Past Continuous action.



When there are **two** actions in the past, and they happened **one after the other**, we use the **Past Simple** tense.

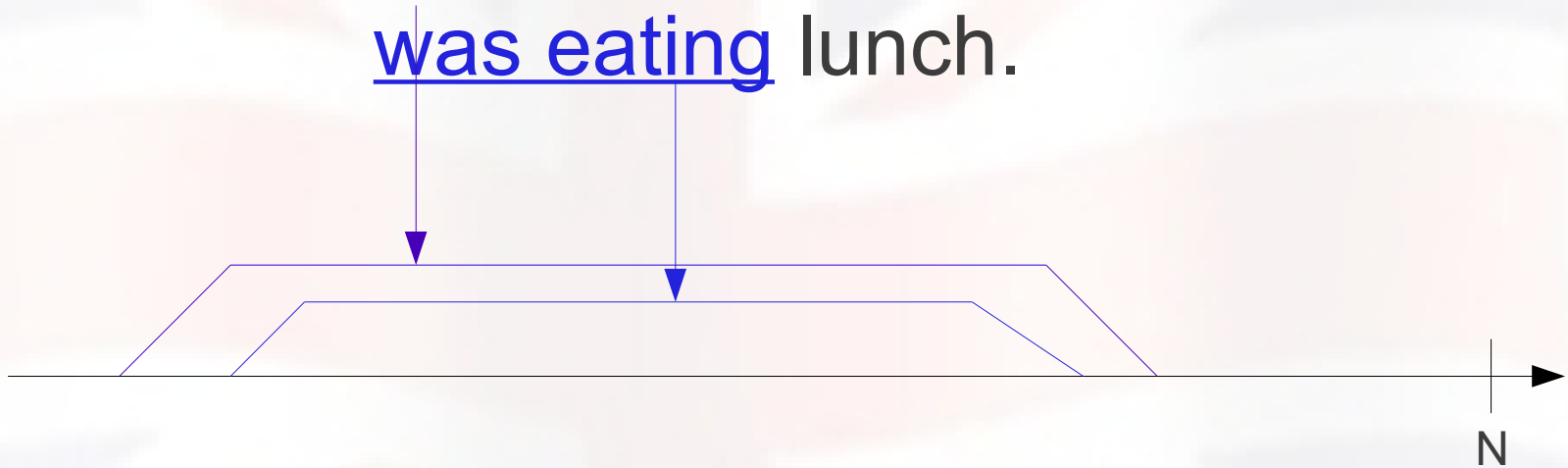
→ Yesterday, I did shopping and met George.





When there are **two** actions in the past, and they happened **at the same time** but **didn't meet**, we use the **Past Continuous** tense.

→ Yesterday, I was doing shopping and George was eating lunch.





End of part 3

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