

SCENE 44 • GRAMMAR

era, dormea, a închis

Background and completed events

6 Exercises • Duration: 20 min.

The festival

Romanian

Read & listen online 

Background and completed events

The imperfect describes a past background or repeated activity; the compound past tells a completed event. Compare **dormea** (was sleeping) and **a dormit** (slept).

Useful background forms are **era, avea, dormea, cânta**. Their first-person forms are **eram, aveam, dormeam, cântam**. Use **când** to connect an event to its setting: **Dormeam când a sunat telefonul**.

The course does not require a full imperfect conjugation for every verb. Learn these common background forms and keep simple event stories in the compound past.

Maria dormea când a sunat telefonul.

Maria was sleeping when the phone rang.

Eu eram acasă.

I was at home.

El avea zece ani.

He was ten years old.

Maria a închis ochii.

Maria closed her eyes.

Eu dormeam când a venit Ana.

I was sleeping when Ana came.

Andrei cânta atunci.

Andrei was playing then.

GRAMMAR

G1) NOTICE THE USEFUL PATTERN

Underline the form practised in this unit.

- 1 Maria dormea când a sunat telefonul.

Meaning: Maria was sleeping when the phone rang.

- 2 Eu eram acasă.

Meaning: I was at home.

- 3 El avea zece ani.

Meaning: He was ten years old.

- 4 Maria a închis ochii.

Meaning: Maria closed her eyes.

G2) CHOOSE THE FORM

Use the English meaning and the pattern in this unit.

1 Maria _____ când a sunat telefonul.

- ☐ (A) dormeam
- ☐ (B) dormeai
- ☐ (C) dormea

Meaning: Maria was sleeping when the phone rang.

2 Eu _____ acasă.

- ☐ (A) erau
- ☐ (B) eram
- ☐ (C) era

Meaning: I was at home.

3 El _____ zece ani.

- ☐ (A) aveam
- ☐ (B) aveați
- ☐ (C) avea

Meaning: He was ten years old.

4 Maria _____ închis ochii.

- ☐ A am
- ☐ B a
- ☐ C au

Meaning: Maria closed her eyes.

5 Eu _____ când a venit Ana.

- ☐ A dormea
- ☐ B dormeam
- ☐ C dormeau

Meaning: I was sleeping when Ana came.

6 Andrei _____ atunci.

- ☐ A cânta
- ☐ B cântam
- ☐ C cântai

Meaning: Andrei was playing then.

G3) COMPLETE THE MESSAGES

Fill the gaps with the words from the box.

avea aveam

El _____ zece ani.

Meaning: He was ten years old.

a am

Maria _____ închis ochii.

Meaning: Maria closed her eyes.

dormeam dormea

Eu _____ când a venit Ana.

Meaning: I was sleeping when Ana came.

cânta cântam

Andrei _____ atunci.

Meaning: Andrei was playing then.

G4) BUILD A SENTENCE

Put the words in order.

- 1 dormea Maria când sunat telefonul. a

Meaning: Maria was sleeping when the phone rang.

- 2 acasă. Eu eram

Meaning: I was at home.

3 El ani. zece avea

Meaning: He was ten years old.

4 închis Maria ochii. a

Meaning: Maria closed her eyes.

5 dormeam venit a Eu Ana. când

Meaning: I was sleeping when Ana came.

6 atunci. Andrei cânta

Meaning: Andrei was playing then.

G5) WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

Choose the right words for the situation.

1 Maria was sleeping when the phone rang. You say:

- ☐ A Maria dormea când a sunat telefonul.
- ☐ B Maria dormeam când a sunat telefonul.

2 I was at home. You say:

- ☐ A Eu eram acasă.
- ☐ B Eu era acasă.

3 He was ten years old. You say:

- ☐ A El aveam zece ani.
- ☐ B El avea zece ani.

4 Maria closed her eyes. You say:

- ☐ A Maria a închis ochii.
- ☐ B Maria am închis ochii.

G6) CONNECT MESSAGES AND MEANINGS

Match the pairs.

- | | |
|--|---|
| ① Maria a închis ochii. | ① Maria was sleeping when the phone rang. |
| ② Eu dormeam când a venit Ana. | ② Andrei was playing then. |
| ③ El avea zece ani. | ③ Maria closed her eyes. |
| ④ Eu eram acasă. | ④ He was ten years old. |
| ⑤ Maria dormea când a sunat telefonul. | ⑤ I was sleeping when Ana came. |
| ⑥ Andrei cânta atunci. | ⑥ I was at home. |