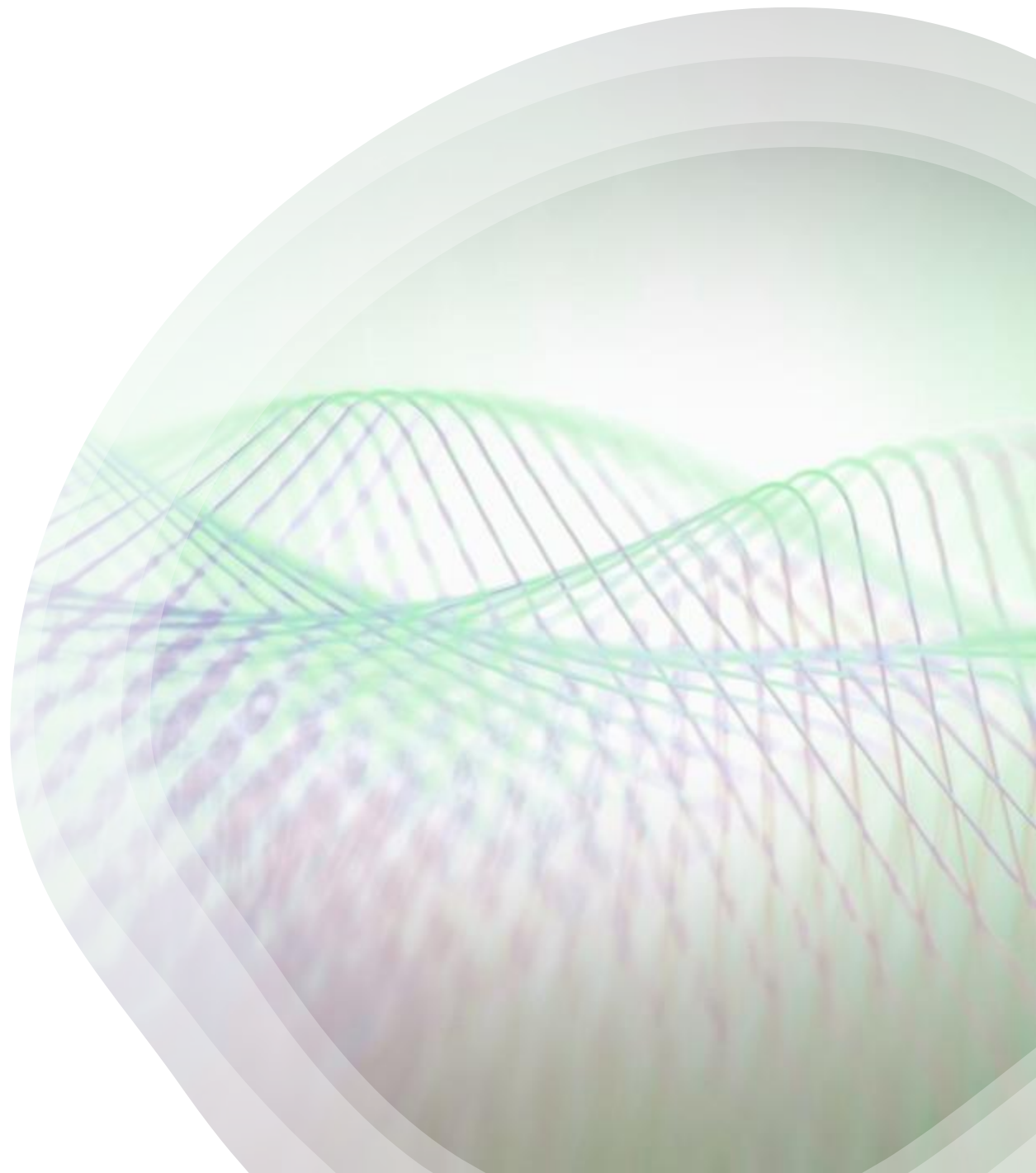


Past Continuous





Two actions

We use the **past continuous** to talk about the past:

for something which **was in progress at the time of another action**:

- *The students **were setting up** their project, when the teacher arrived.*
- **Compare:** *The students **set up** their project when (= after) the teacher **arrived**.*

(two consecutive actions. First the teacher arrived, then they set up their project.)

Specific time

for something that **was in progress at**
a specific time:

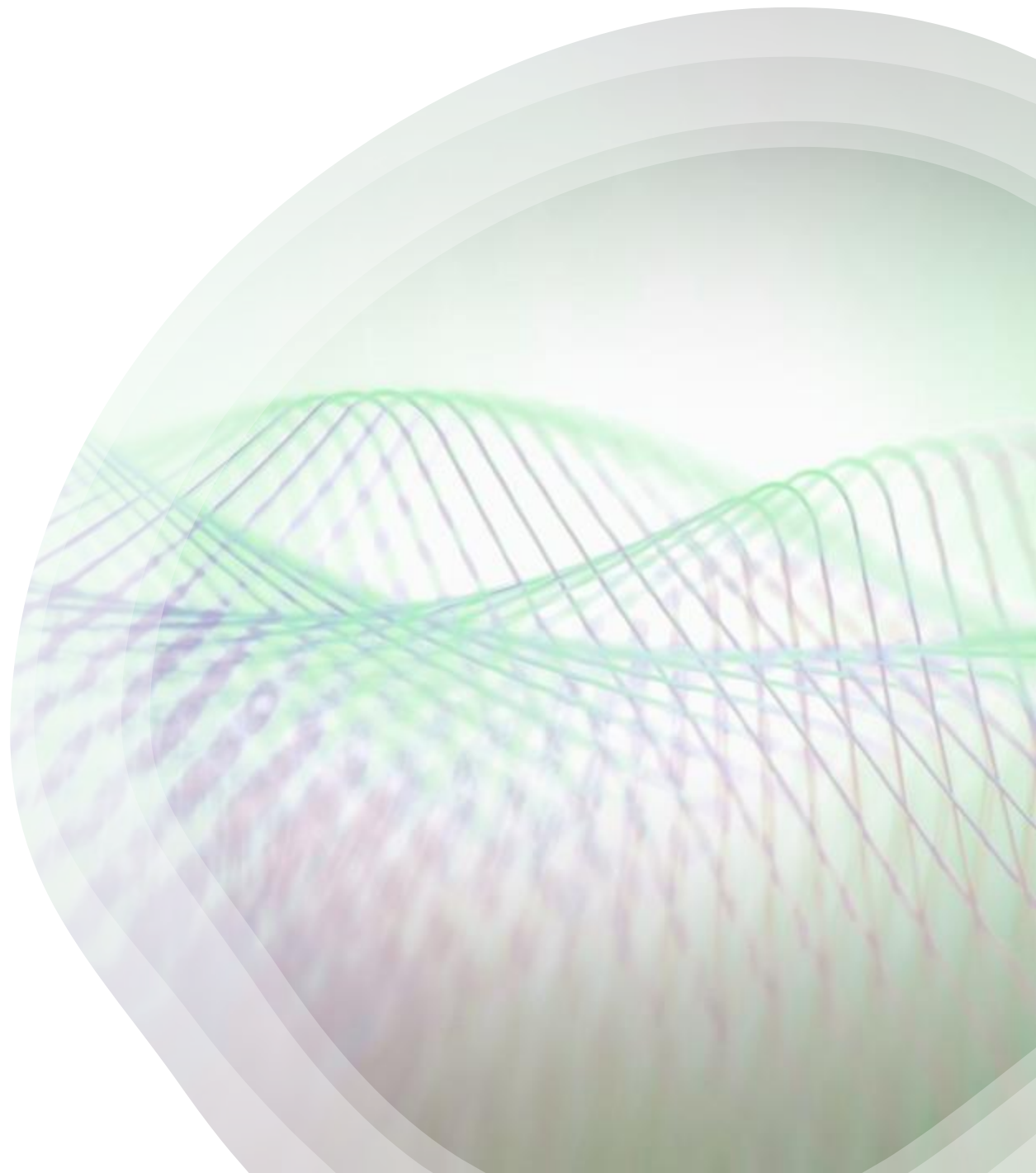
- *It was eight o'clock. I was writing a letter.*
- Compare: *At eight o'clock I wrote (= started writing) a letter.*



Exercise

1. We _____ (chat), when the professor _____ (enter).
2. The sun _____ (rise), when we _____ (leave) the station.
3. When we _____ (see) Simon, he _____ (work).
4. The phone _____ (ring), when I _____ (have) lunch.
5. He _____ (paint) the door, when it _____ (start) to rain.
6. She _____ (have) supper when she _____ (get) home.
7. The patients in the hall _____ (wait) when the doctor _____ (arrive).

THE END



Repetition

for something that **happened again and again:**

- *I **was practising** every day, three times a day.*
- *They **were meeting** secretly after school.*
- *They **were always quarrelling**.*

Change or Growth

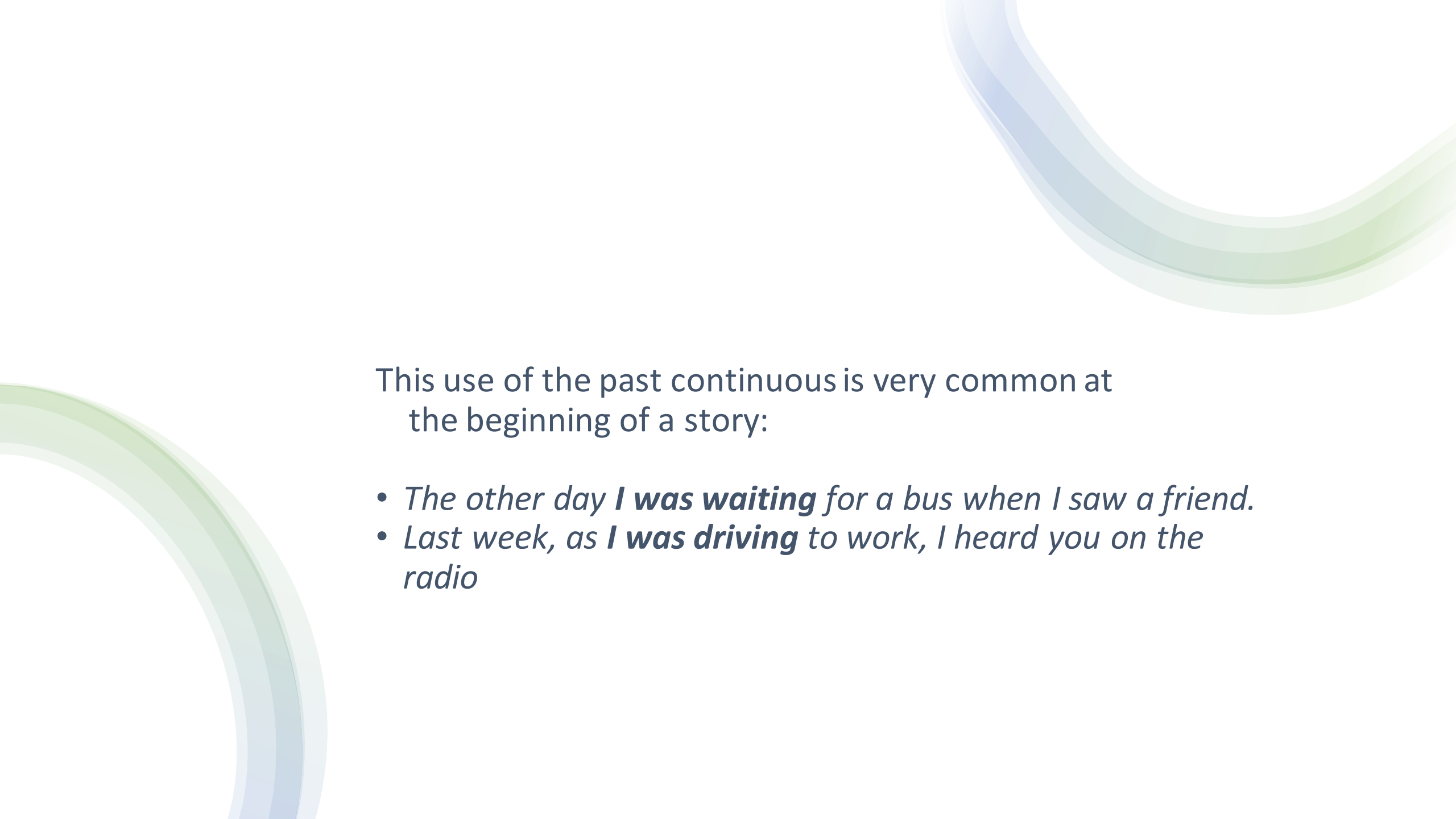
with verbs showing **change or growth**:

- *The children **were growing up** quickly.*
- *Her English **was improving**.*
- *My hair **was going** grey.*
- *The town **was changing** quickly.*

We do **not** normally use the past continuous with **stative verbs**. We use the **past simple** instead:

- *When I got home, I really **wanted** (NOT ~~was wanting~~) a shower.*





This use of the past continuous is very common at the beginning of a story:

- *The other day **I was waiting** for a bus when I saw a friend.*
- *Last week, as **I was driving** to work, I heard you on the radio*