Aspect: (dokonavy a nedokonavy vid)

In the present tense, we *almost always* use the present simple.

They use email.

You can only use present continuous if you can put "right now" (or something with the same meaning) into the sentence.

They are using email right now.

In the past tense, we almost always use the past simple ©

They didn't prepare for their classes. ©

They weren't preparing for their classes.

Use the past continuous ONLY as a background tense for the past simple:

They were eating cockroaches when I arrived.

They were skiing when suddenly a bear jumped out of the woods and ate them.

They were crying when their mother arrived.

They were playing the piano when their prof. jumped off the bridge and died.