The Simple Past and the Past Progressive with When and While

Simple Past + Simple Past

I rushed into a store when it began to rain.  
A  
B

When it began to rain, I rushed into a store.  
B  
A

Past  

Present

(A happened immediately after B happened.)

Simple Past + Past Progressive

I was walking down the street when it began to rain.  
A  
B

While I was walking down the street, it began to rain.  
A  
B

Past  

Present

(A was interrupted by B.)

Past Progressive + Past Progressive

While Mary was writing a letter, her children were playing outside.  
A  
B

Past  

Present

(A and B were going on at the same time.)