

Past perfect (I had done)

A

Study this example situation:

at 10.30



PAUL

at 11.00



SARAH

Sarah went to a party last week. Paul went to the party too, but they didn't see each other. Paul left the party at 10.30 and Sarah arrived at 11 o'clock. So:

When Sarah arrived at the party, Paul wasn't there.

He **had gone** home.

Had gone is the *past perfect (simple)*:

| | | | |
|----------------------------|------------|-------------------------------|--|
| I/we/they/you he/she/it | had | (= I'd etc.) (= he'd etc.) | gone seen finished etc. |
|----------------------------|------------|-------------------------------|--|

The past perfect simple is **had** + *past participle* (**gone/seen/finished** etc.).

Sometimes we talk about something that happened in the past:

- ☐ Sarah **arrived** at the party.

This is the starting point of the story. Then, if we want to talk about things that happened *before* this time, we use the past perfect (**had** ...):

- ☐ When Sarah arrived at the party, Paul **had** already **gone** home.

Some more examples:

- ☐ When we got home last night, we found that somebody **had broken** into the flat.
- ☐ Karen didn't want to go to the cinema with us because she'd already **seen** the movie.
- ☐ At first I thought I'd **done** the right thing, but I soon realised that I'd **made** a big mistake.
- ☐ The man sitting next to me on the plane was very nervous. He **hadn't flown** before.
or ... He **had** never **flown** before.

B

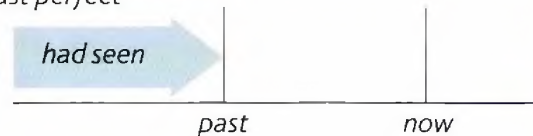
Compare the *present perfect* (**have seen** etc.) and the *past perfect* (**had seen** etc.):

Present perfect



- ☐ Who is that woman? I've **seen** her before, but I can't remember where.
- ☐ We aren't hungry. We've just **had** lunch.
- ☐ The house is dirty. They **haven't cleaned** it for weeks.

Past perfect



- ☐ I wasn't sure who she was. I'd **seen** her before, but I couldn't remember where.
- ☐ We weren't hungry. We'd just **had** lunch.
- ☐ The house was dirty. They **hadn't cleaned** it for weeks.

C

Compare the *past simple* (**left, was** etc.) and the *past perfect* (**had left, had been** etc.):

- ☐ A: Was Tom there when you arrived?
B: Yes, but he **left** soon afterwards.
- ☐ Kate **wasn't** at home when I phoned.
She **was** at her mother's house.

- ☐ A: Was Tom there when you arrived?
B: No, he **had** already **left**.
- ☐ Kate **had** just **got** home when I phoned.
She **had been** at her mother's house.

Exercises

15.1 Read the situations and write sentences from the words in brackets.

- 1 You went to Sue's house, but she wasn't there.
(she / go / out) She had gone out.
- 2 You went back to your home town after many years. It wasn't the same as before.
(it / change / a lot) _____
- 3 I invited Rachel to the party, but she couldn't come.
(she / arrange / to do something else) _____
- 4 You went to the cinema last night. You got to the cinema late.
(the film / already / start) _____
- 5 It was nice to see Daniel again after such a long time.
(I / not / see / him for five years) _____
- 6 I offered Sue something to eat, but she wasn't hungry.
(she / just / have / breakfast) _____

15.2 For each situation, write a sentence ending with **never ... before**. Use the verb in brackets.

- 1 The man sitting next to you on the plane was very nervous. It was his first flight.
(fly) He'd never flown before.
- 2 Somebody sang a song. I didn't know it.
(hear) I _____ before.
- 3 Sam played tennis yesterday. He wasn't very good at it because it was his first game.
(play) He _____
- 4 Last year we went to Mexico. It was our first time there.
(be there) We _____

15.3 Use the sentences on the left to complete the paragraphs on the right. These sentences are in the order in which they happened – so (a) happened before (b), (b) before (c) etc. But your paragraph begins with the underlined sentence, so sometimes you need the past perfect.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 (a) Somebody broke into the office during the night. | } We arrived at work in the morning and found that <u>somebody had broken</u> into the office during the night. So _____ the police. |
| (b) <u>We arrived at work in the morning.</u> | |
| (c) We called the police. | |
| 2 (a) Laura went out this morning. | } I went to Laura's house this morning and rang her doorbell, but _____ no answer. _____ out. |
| (b) <u>I rang her doorbell.</u> | |
| (c) There was no answer. | |
| 3 (a) Jim came back from holiday a few days ago. | } I met Jim a few days ago. _____ just _____ holiday. _____ very well. |
| (b) <u>I met him the same day.</u> | |
| (c) He looked very well. | |
| 4 (a) Kevin sent Sally lots of emails. | } Yesterday Kevin _____ from Sally. _____ very surprised. _____ lots of emails, but _____. |
| (b) She never replied to them. | |
| (c) <u>Yesterday he got a phone call from her.</u> | |
| (d) He was very surprised. | |

15.4 Put the verb into the correct form, past perfect (**I had done**) or past simple (**I did**).

- 1 'Was Paul at the party when you arrived?' 'No, he had gone (go) home.'
- 2 I felt very tired when I got home, so I _____ (go) straight to bed.
- 3 The house was very quiet when I got home. Everybody _____ (go) to bed.
- 4 Sorry I'm late. The car _____ (break) down on my way here.
- 5 We were driving along the road when we _____ (see) a car which _____ (break) down, so we _____ (stop) to help.

Past perfect continuous (I had been doing)

A

Study this example situation:

yesterday morning


Yesterday morning I got up and looked out of the window. The sun was shining, but the ground was very wet.

It **had been raining**.

It was *not* raining when I looked out of the window; the sun was shining. But it **had been** raining before.

Had been -ing is the *past perfect continuous*:

I/we/you/they
he/she/it

had

(= I'd etc.)
(= he'd etc.)

been

doing
working
playing etc.

Some more examples:

- ☐ When the boys came into the house, their clothes were dirty, their hair was untidy and one of them had a black eye. They'd **been fighting**.
- ☐ I was very tired when I got home. I'd **been working** hard all day.
- ☐ When I went to Madrid a few years ago, I stayed with a friend of mine. She **hadn't been living** there very long, but she knew the city very well.

B

You can say that something **had been happening** for a period of time before something else happened:

- ☐ We'd **been playing** tennis for about half an hour when it started to rain heavily.
- ☐ Paul went to the doctor last Friday. He **hadn't been feeling** well for some time.

C

Compare **have been -ing** (*present perfect continuous*) and **had been -ing** (*past perfect continuous*):

Present perfect continuous
I have been -ing
past
now

- ☐ I hope the bus comes soon. I've **been waiting** for 20 minutes. (*before now*)
- ☐ James is out of breath. He **has been running**.

Past perfect continuous
I had been -ing
past
now

- ☐ At last the bus came. I'd **been waiting** for 20 minutes. (*before the bus came*)
- ☐ James was out of breath. He **had been running**.

D

Compare **was -ing** (*past continuous*) and **had been -ing**:

- ☐ It **wasn't raining** when we went out. The sun **was shining**. But it **had been raining**, so the ground was wet.
- ☐ Katherine **was sitting** in an armchair resting. She was tired because she'd **been working** very hard.

E

Some verbs (for example, **know** and **like**) are not normally used in the continuous:

- ☐ We were good friends. We **had known** each other for years. (*not had been knowing*)
- ☐ I was surprised when Lisa cut her hair. She'd **had** long hair since I first met her. (*not she'd been having*)

For a list of these verbs, see Unit 4A. For **have**, see Unit 17.

Exercises

16.1 Read the situations and make sentences from the words in brackets.

- I was very tired when I arrived home.
(I / work / hard all day) *I'd been working hard all day.*
- The two boys came into the house. They had a football and they were both very tired.
(they / play / football)
- I was disappointed when I had to cancel my holiday.
(I / look / forward to it)
- Ann woke up in the middle of the night. She was frightened and didn't know where she was.
(she / dream)
- When I got home, Mark was sitting in front of the TV. He had just turned it off.
(he / watch / a film)

16.2 Read the situations and complete the sentences.

- We played tennis yesterday. Half an hour after we began playing, it started to rain.
We had been playing for half an hour when it started to rain.
- I had arranged to meet Tom in a restaurant. I arrived and waited for him. After 20 minutes I realised that I was in the wrong restaurant.
I for 20 minutes when I
..... the wrong restaurant.
- Sarah got a job in factory. Five years later the factory closed down.
At the time the factory , Sarah
..... there for five years.
- I went to a concert last week. The orchestra began playing. After about ten minutes a man in the audience suddenly started shouting.
The orchestra when

This time make your own sentence:

- I began walking along the road. I
when

16.3 Put the verb into the most suitable form, past continuous (I was doing), past perfect (I had done) or past perfect continuous (I had been doing).

- It was very noisy next door. Our neighbours *were having* (have) a party.
- We were good friends. *We'd known* (we / know) each other for years.
- John and I went for a walk. I had difficulty keeping up with him because
..... (he / walk) so fast.
- Sue was sitting on the ground. She was out of breath. (she / run).
- When I arrived, everybody was sitting round the table with their mouths full.
..... (they / eat).
- When I arrived, everybody was sitting round the table and talking. Their mouths were empty, but their stomachs were full. (they / eat).
- James was on his hands and knees on the floor. (he / look) for his contact lens.
- When I arrived, Kate (wait) for me. She was annoyed because I was late and (she / wait) for a long time.
- I was sad when I sold my car. (I / have) it for a very long time.
- We were extremely tired at the end of the journey. (we / travel) for more than 24 hours.