

## GRAMMAR FOCUS

### Past perfect

Do you know how to use phrases like *They'd finished the project by March* or *Had you finished work when I called?* Test what you know with interactive exercises and read the explanation to help you.

Look at these examples to see how the past perfect is used.

*He couldn't make a sandwich because he'd forgotten to buy bread.*

*The hotel was full, so I was glad that we'd booked in advance.*

*My new job wasn't exactly what I'd expected.*

**Try this exercise to test your grammar.**

### Grammar B1-B2: Past perfect: 01

**1** Choose the correct option to complete the sentence.

**a.** When she \_\_\_ on the course, she had never studied a foreign language before.

enrolled

'd enrolled

**b.** When I closed the door, I realised that I \_\_\_ my keys inside.

left

'd left

**c.** She looked really sad but I didn't know what \_\_\_.

happened

'd happened

**d.** \_\_\_ when you rang the doorbell?

Did Sai already leave

Had Sai already left

**e.** This is the oldest building in the town. It \_\_\_ over 200 years ago.

was built

'd been built

**f.** By the time I moved in, they \_\_\_ the building work.

finished

'd finished

**g.** I opened the door, and \_\_\_ inside.

went

'd gone

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h. I looked in the letter box yesterday and the letter still \_\_\_\_.

didn't arrive

hadn't arrived

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Read the explanation to learn more.

### Grammar explanation

## Time up to a point in the past

We use the **past perfect simple (had + past participle)** to talk about time up to a certain point in the past.

*She'd **published** her first poem by the time she was eight.*

*We'd **finished** all the water before we were halfway up the mountain.*

***Had** the parcel **arrived** when you called yesterday?*

## Past perfect for the earlier of two past actions

We can use the **past perfect** to show **the order of two past events**. The past perfect shows the **earlier action** and the **past simple** shows the **later action**.

*When the police **arrived**, the thief **had escaped**.*

It doesn't matter in which order we say the two events. The following sentence has the same meaning.

*The thief **had escaped** when the police **arrived**.*

Note that **if there's only a single event, we don't use the past perfect**, even if it happened a long time ago.

*The Romans **spoke** Latin. (NOT The Romans **had spoken** Latin.)*

## Past perfect after before

We can also use **before + past perfect** to show that an action was not done or was incomplete when the past simple action happened.

*They left **before** I'd spoken to them.*

*Sadly, the author **died** **before** he'd finished the series.*

## Adverbs

We often use the adverbs **already** (= 'before the specified time'), **still** (= 'as previously'), **just** (= 'a very short time before the specified time'), **ever** (= 'at any time before the specified time') or **never** (= 'at no time before the specified time') with the past perfect.

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*I called his office but he'd already left.*

*It still hadn't rained at the beginning of May.*

*I went to visit her when she'd just moved to Berlin.*

*It was the most beautiful photo I'd ever seen.*

*Had you ever visited London when you moved there?*

*I'd never met anyone from California before I met Jim.*

Do this exercise to test your grammar again.

### Grammar B1-B2: Past perfect: 02

2 Choose the correct option to complete the sentence.

a. By the time I could talk to her, she \_\_\_ to quit her job.

decided

'd decided

b. I looked at the photo and suddenly realised that I \_\_\_ that man somewhere before.

saw

'd seen

c. First I \_\_\_ the salad, then I toasted the bread.

made

'd made

d. \_\_\_ breakfast when you got up?

Did James already cook

Had James already cooked

e. She didn't feel like another coffee as she \_\_\_ one.

just had

'd just had

f. We had the French exam this morning. It \_\_\_ as hard as I'd expected, though.

wasn't

hadn't been

g. I asked Sara if she wanted to go for a walk, but she still \_\_\_ her homework.

didn't finish

hadn't finished

h. Dinosaurs \_\_\_ hundreds of millions of years ago.

lived

had lived