

Past Perfect and Past Simple

The past perfect is used to describe an action that happened before another action in the past. It is often used with the past simple.

Past perfect structure: Subject + had + past participle

Sequence words help show the order of past events. In this worksheet, use the past perfect for the earlier action and the past simple for the later action. 'By then' is often used with the past perfect. 'By the time' is usually followed by the past simple in the time clause and the past perfect in the main clause.

Example: Silvia had cleaned her house before her guests arrived.



A. Complete the sentences with the past perfect or past simple form of the verbs in brackets.

1. After I (cut) the grass, it (start) to rain.
2. My boss (ask) me to email a customer but by then I already (turn off) my computer.
3. By the time my husband (get) home, I (eat) dinner.
4. I (buy) her a watch before I (find out) she wanted a necklace.
5. Ann already (type) ten pages when her computer (crash).
6. As soon as the bar (close), we (go) back to the hotel.
7. I (arrive) at class on time but by then the professor already (start) the lecture.
8. They (restart) the game as soon as the rain (stop).

B. Rewrite the sentence parts in the correct order.

1. my parents had already left / I got home / by the time

.....

2. before / I had cleared the snow off it / I started my car

.....

3. after / I went to the book club / I had finished the book

.....

4. I bought the new iPhone / they had already released a new version / but by then

.....

C. Match the past perfect and past simple sentence halves together.

1. As soon as I had finished my sushi, a. he fed the dog
2. By the time I gave the teacher my essay, b. as soon as I had landed on the island.
3. After I had bought a new bed, c. she made a short thank-you speech.
4. After the man had come home, d. before I saw it with my family.
5. I had watched the film alone e. before I got married.
6. After she had read all the greeting cards, f. I had revised it three times.
7. I had already bought my own house g. I realised I didn't have the space for it.
8. I went straight to the beach h. I felt sick.

D. Complete the past perfect and past simple sentence halves with your own ideas.

1. As soon as I had finished the exam
2. Before Alice got angry with me
3. After my mum had told me not to
4. She watched TV after
5. I had left late for my meeting and by the time

6. I didn't go to my interview after
7. The excitement was over as soon as
8. I had shown up for my date but by the time I

E. Now, answer the questions. Use sequence words in your responses.

1. How did you feel after your last holiday had ended?
.....

2. What interesting things had you already done by the time you reached 14 years old?
.....

3. Which languages had you learnt before you started English lessons?
.....

4. How many phones had you had before you bought your present one?
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