

Past Perfect Simple and Continuous

Unit 3

PAST PERFECT SIMPLE

We use the past perfect simple:

- to indicate that we are talking about something which happened before something which is described in the past simple:
  When he got to the station, his train had already left.
  Compare this with:
  When he got to the station, his train left.
  This indicates that the train left at the time he arrived.
- typically with time expressions such as when, as soon as, after, before, etc.:
  She started driving before he'd fastened his seatbelt.
- often with these adverbs: already, just, never:
  He'd never eaten steak and kidney pie until he came to England.

PAST PERFECT CONTINUOUS

We use the past perfect continuous to show that we are talking about something which happened before something which is described in the past simple, but it:

- focuses on the length of time:
  Mandy needed a walk because she'd been sitting down all day.
- says how long something happened up to a point in the past:
  It was two months before the teachers noticed that Paula hadn't been coming to school.
  He'd been playing for Arsenal for only two games when he scored his first goal.

PRACTICE BANK

A. Fill in the gaps with suitable verbs in the past perfect continuous.

1. The phone had been ringing for several minutes before I heard it.
2. Katya _____ (not) German with Mr Fauser for very long when he retired.
3. Liz didn't know about the surprise party which her parents _____ for weeks.
4. I was very pleased when the bus finally arrived because I _____ that I would be late for work.
5. When the doctor eventually called my name I _____ for 40 minutes.
6. My brother lost his job because he _____ jokes to everyone in the office by email.
7. The band _____ (not) for long when the lights went out.
8. We _____ our money to buy a car but we decided to go to Australia instead.
9. How long _____ (they) for their keys when they found them in the boot of the car?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

B. All these sentences have a verb in the past perfect simple. Is it possible to replace it with the past perfect continuous?

1. I'd worked for the engineering company for three months before I realised my neighbour also worked there. _____
2. As soon as George had finished the race, he drank three glasses of water. _____
3. Everything was white because it had snowed all night. _____
4. My parents were delighted when I qualified because they had always wanted me to be a doctor. _____
5. She was exhausted when she got out of the pool because she'd swum three kilometres. _____
6. We'd only just sat down when the waitress came to take our order. _____
7. I could tell from their faces that they had argued about something. _____
8. Our dinner wasn't cooked because I'd forgotten to switch the oven on. _____

C. Look at this sentence from Reading and Use of English Part 7 (A Pauline Vernon) and answer the questions below.

When my mum and I flew out to visit him for three weeks, he had already organised our stay in great detail.

1. Which of these actions happened first?
A. He had organised their stay.
B. They flew out to visit him.
2. Which verb form is used to indicate that something happened before something else in the past?
3. Compare the sentence above with the one below.
What does the sentence below suggest about when the stay was organised?
When my mother and I flew out to visit him for three weeks, he organised our stay in great detail.

D. Complete these sentences by writing the verb in brackets in the correct form (past perfect simple or continuous) in the gaps.

1. The storm damaged the house where she _____ (live) since she left school.
2. We _____ (walk) up the mountain for about three hours when suddenly it _____ (begin) to rain.
3. I _____ (already finish) the work when she _____ (offer) to help me.
4. I _____ (only speak) for 30 seconds when he interrupted me with a question.
5. I was tired and dirty when I _____ (get) home because I _____ (walk) in the country all afternoon.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

E. Fill in the gaps with the past simple, the past perfect or the past perfect continuous of the verb in brackets.

1. I'd never ridden (never ride) a bike until I __went__ (go) to live in Amsterdam.
2. When Martin _____ (come) into the room, his mother nearly _____ (faint) because she _____ (see) him for nearly 20 years.
3. We were held up in a traffic jam so the concert _____ (begin) by the time we _____ (arrive).
4. How long _____ (you applying) for jobs when you _____ (get) this one?
5. _____ (you ever do) any carpentry before you _____ (build) that cupboard?
6. I _____ (not see) Lisa when I went round last night because she _____ (go) to stay with her grandmother.
7. As soon as I _____ (sit) down on the train, I realised that I _____ (leave) my passport at home.
8. I _____ (drive) for about four hours when I _____ (realize) that I was completely lost.
9. When I _____ (go) into the room, everyone _____ (stop) talking and _____ (look) at me.
10. After he _____ (wash) his clothes, he _____ (hang) them outside to dry.
11. The manager was shocked when he _____ (discover) that Jane was a thief. Up until then, he _____ (believe) that she was completely honest.

F. Fill in the gaps with the past simple, the past perfect or the past perfect continuous of the verbs in the box.

~~agree~~ move arrange arrive bang come not answer not hear phone forget go have play practise

THE BAND PLAYED ON ...

I had a rather embarrassing experience last year. At that time I played in a band with some friends of mine and, rather nervously, we'd agreed (1) to play at a friend's wedding. We (2) _____ together for about three months and it was the first booking we _____ (ever) (3) so we _____ (4) really hard for weeks.

The wedding was on a Saturday. The day before the wedding I had moved to a new flat so I _____ (5) furniture all day and _____ (6) to bed exhausted. At nine o'clock on the Saturday morning the rest of the band met, as we _____ (7), to practise. They kept phoning me but I _____ (8). So in the end one of them _____ (9) round and _____ (10) on the door for fifteen minutes until I woke up. He told me that they _____ (11) me all morning. I _____ (12) anything and I nearly missed the wedding. When I finally _____ (13) at the wedding, I realised that I _____ (14) my guitar.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

G. For each gap, choose a verb from the box and put it into the past perfect or the past perfect continuous.

feel	forget	own	stand up	try	~~wait~~

1. The crowd had been waiting for over an hour for the match to begin.
2. We _____ to find the key for five minutes when my dad found it in his pocket.
3. When he retired, my grandfather _____ his business far more than 40 years.
4. David _____ unwell for a few days so he went to the doctor's.
5. Katrina was really angry with me because I _____ to tell her the change of plan.
6. I was quite tired when I got home as I _____ watching our school football team for over an hour.

H. For each gap, put the verb in brackets into the past simple, past continuous, past perfect simple or past perfect continuous.

Last week I (1) went (go) to the mountains with my cousins. None of us (2)_____ (ever ski) before so we (3) _____ (look) forward to it for months. While we (4) _____ (drive) to the airport, it (5) _____ (start) to snow and we were really excited. But when we (6) _____ (get) off the plane in the mountains, there (7) _____ (not be) any snow at all. Everyone there (8) _____ (say) it was too warm for snow. We (9) _____ (go) to bed feeling sad that we wouldn't be able to ski. But when we (10) _____ (get) up the next morning and (11) _____ (look) out of the window we realised that it (12) _____ (snow) all night and we would be able to ski after all.

I. In your notebook, rewrite the following passage, making all the necessary tense changes.

It's 10 o'clock at night. The offices of 'The Daily News' are buzzing with excitement. The deadline for the paper is in half an hour and they are frantically trying to finish the front page. Everyone has been working all evening without a break. Some of the journalists have been at the office since early morning. They have all been trying to get an exclusive story, to find out something that no other journalist has discovered. The main story is a big one. The Prime Minister has resigned. Everyone knows that his government has had lots of problems in the last year but his resignation is nonetheless a big surprise. Rumours have been going round all day about the real reasons for the announcement. Some say that he has been involved in some financial scandal. Others say that he has been seeing another woman. All the papers have been working all day to get the best story. And they've been doing their best to find out what the other papers have said. The whole day has been very tense. Suddenly the editor asks everyone to be quiet. There is a telephone call from the Prime Minister's office.

Example: It was 10 o'clock at night. The offices of 'The Daily News' were buzzing with excitement.

LIVEWORKSHEETS



Future



SO AND SUCH

In English, several different tenses are used to talk about the future: the present simple, the present continuous, will/shall, the future continuous and going to.

PRESENT SIMPLE

We use the present simple for scheduled events with a future meaning:

- for timetables (planes, buses etc. leaving and arriving):
  My plane leaves Edinburgh on Tuesday a.t 11.05.
  My plane arrives at Amsterdam airport at 13.40.
- for programmes (when a conference, a course, a football match, a film etc. begins and ends):
  The conference starts on Wednesday at 9.30.
- for people if their plans are fixed by a timetable:
  The main speaker arrives on Tuesday afternoon.

PRESENT CONTINUOUS

We use the present continuous:

- for plans which have already been arranged:
  People are travelling from, all over the word.
  What are you doing tomorrow evening? I'm flying to a conference in Amsterdam. (= already arranged)
  I'm having my eyes tested on Saturday afternoon. (= I have an appointment)

WILL-FUTURE

In formal English, shall is occasionally used with I / we instead of will.
We use will:

- for decisions made at the moment of speaking:
  I'll have breakfast in my room.
  I'll ring them now.

- for anything which is uncertain, especially with probably, maybe, I think, I expect, and I hope:
  I probably won't be back in time.
  I think I'll get a meal in town.

- for situations that we predict will happen but which are not definitely decided or arranged:
  In 100 years the world will be a very different place. There'll be millions more people but there won't be as much oil available for energy. (= nobody knows definitely what the world will be like in 100 years)

Compare:
I'm taking my History exam again tomorrow. (arranged)
I'll get higher marks this time. (not something which is arranged or decided in advance - a hopeful prediction)

- for something in the future which doesn't depend on a decision by the speaker:
  I'll be 23 on my next birthday. (= I can't change this, it will just happen)
  There'll be a full moon tomorrow.

LIVEWORKSHEETS