

PAST TENSES

Past Simple vs. Past Continuous

We use the past simple and continuous together when we want to talk about an action in progress (Past continuous) which was interrupted by a second action (Past simple).

Example:

They **were talking** when he **fainted**.

Exercises

Instructions: highlight the correct forms to complete the sentence.

1. My father **painted** / **was painting** the house when he **fell off** / **was falling off** the ladder.
2. While I **drove** / **was driving**, I **was having** / **had** an accident.
3. The thieves **hid** / **were hiding** in the kitchen when the police **came** / **was coming** in.
4. Alan **looked** / **was looking** out of the window when he **was seeing** / **saw** a UFO.
5. We **broke** / **were breaking** some glasses while we **cleaned** / **were cleaning** the house.

Past Simple vs. Past Perfect

We use the past simple and past perfect when we want to talk about TWO related actions in the past, but one action happened before (Past Perfect) the second action (Past Simple).

Past Perfect = 1st action.

Past Simple = 2nd action.

Example:

He **fainted** because he **hadn't had** breakfast.

Exercises

Instructions: highlight the correct forms to complete the sentence.

1. I **forgot** / **had forgotten** we **agreed** / **had agreed** to see my aunt and uncle at the weekend.
2. Ella **knew** / **had known** she **left** / **had left** her purse as soon as she got to the bus stop.
3. After a few days Finn **returned** / **had returned** from his trip, he **wanted** / **had wanted** to travel again.
4. Beth really **believed** / **had believed** she **met** / **had met** Greg before.
5. He **failed** / **had failed** his driving test because he **didn't practice** / **hadn't practiced** much.