

Past perfect simple

had + past participle

statement

I/you/he/she/it/we/they **had ('d)**
written ...

negative

I/you/he/she/it/we/they **had not (hadn't)**
written ...

question

Had I/you/he/she/it/we/they
written ...?

Use

Actions and states
before a moment in
the past

Example

I'd finished my homework
a few minutes before the
lesson started.
Mrs Cross **had been** a
teacher for twenty years
before she became a head
teacher.

Finished actions and
states where the
important thing is the
result at a moment in
the past

We were happy because
we'd all **done** our
homework.

Helpful hints

The past perfect simple is often used with the following words and phrases:

- by I'd finished my homework **by** eight o'clock.
- by the time **By the time** I got to class, the lesson had started.
- before The teacher had checked the answers **before** the lesson.
- after I left **after** I'd finished the test.
- just Simon had **just** finished the test when the bell rang.
- when I left **when** I'd finished the test.

Watch out!

- Whether we use the past simple or the past perfect simple can change the meaning of a sentence.
✓ The lesson **started** when I arrived. (= I arrived and then the lesson started.)
✓ The lesson **had started** when I arrived. (= The lesson started and then I arrived.)
- Some verbs have irregular past participle forms. See page 182.

Past perfect continuous

had + been + -ing

statement

I/you/he/she/it/we/they **had ('d)**
been writing ...

negative

I/you/he/she/it/we/they **had not (hadn't)**
been writing ...

question

Had I/you/he/she/it/we/they
been writing ...?

Use

Actions continuing
up to, or stopping
just before, a
moment in the past

Example

We'd been doing grammar
exercises for over an hour, so
we were really bored!
They **had been working** so hard.

Helpful hints

The past perfect continuous is often used with the following words and phrases:

- for Tony had been studying **for** hours, so he had a headache.
- since She'd been hoping to win the competition **since** the summer.
- before We'd been talking about the Internet **before** the lesson started.
- all day/night/etc I'd been studying **all day**.

Watch out!

- The past perfect simple often emphasises the result of an action:
✓ She'd **written** an article for the school newspaper. (= She'd finished it.)
- The past perfect continuous often emphasises the action, and the time spent on the action, rather than the result:
✓ She'd **been writing** an article for the newspaper. (= She'd started, but she hadn't finished it.)

A Complete using the correct past perfect simple form of the verbs in brackets.

- 1 By the time I arrived, everyone (**leave**)!
- 2 Steve (**already / see**) the film, so he didn't come with us to the cinema.
- 3 Tina (**not / finish**) doing the housework by seven o'clock, so she called Andrea to tell her she would be late.
- 4 (**you / just / speak**) to Billy when I rang?
- 5 The car broke down just after (**we / set off**).
- 6 I didn't eat anything at the party because (**I / already / eat**) at home.
- 7 (**you / hear**) about the accident before you saw it on TV?

B Choose the sentence (A or B) which means the same as the first sentence.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 We'd had dinner when Wendy arrived.
A Wendy arrived and then we had dinner.
B We had dinner and then Wendy arrived. 2 I read the book after I'd seen the film.
A I saw the film and then I read the book.
B I read the book and then I saw the film. 3 By the time Dad came home, I'd gone to bed.
A I went to bed before Dad came home.
B I went to bed after Dad came home. 4 She didn't go to bed until her mum had come home.
A She went to bed and then her mum came home.
B Her mum came home and then she went to bed. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5 Mr Banks hadn't arrived at the office by the time I got there.
A I arrived before Mr Banks.
B Mr Banks arrived before me. 6 They'd bought the plane tickets before they heard about the cheaper flight.
A They bought the plane tickets and later they heard about the cheaper flight.
B They heard about the cheaper flight and then they bought the plane tickets. 7 The girls had tidied the house when the visitors arrived.
A The visitors arrived and later the girls tidied the house.
B The girls tidied the house and then the visitors arrived. |
|--|---|

C Write sentences using the prompts. One of the verbs must be in the past perfect simple.

1 we / just / hear / the news / when / you / ring

.....

2 I / already / think of / that / before / you / suggest / it

.....

3 when / I / turn on / the TV / the programme / already / start

.....

4 she / be / hungry / because / she / not / eat / anything / all day

.....

5 by the time / I leave / school / I / decide / to become / a musician

.....

- D** Look at the pictures and complete the sentences. Use the correct form of the past perfect continuous.



- 1 She was tired because
..... (**run**).
- 2 They were hot because
..... (**dance**).
- 3 The garden was flooded because
..... (**it / rain / all night**).
- 4 Did they crash because
..... (**drive / too fast**)?
- 5 When I arrived,
..... (**they / wait / for over half an hour**).
- 6 When I got there,
..... (**they / not / wait / long**).

- E** Choose the correct answer.

- 1 I'd only the washing-up for a few minutes when Clare came home, so she offered to finish it.
A done B been doing
- 2 Had you already James his birthday present when we gave him ours?
A given B been giving
- 3 Gail hadn't me that she would help me, so I wasn't angry when she didn't.
A told B been telling
- 4 Mum had her cup of tea for several minutes before she realised it had salt in it!
A drunk B been drinking
- 5 We'd ready all day when they called to say the party had been cancelled.
A got B been getting
- 6 It was a fantastic experience because I'd never in a plane before.
A flown B been flying

- F** If a line is correct, put a tick (✓). If there is an extra word in a line, write the word.

Dear Diary,

- 1 had This morning my exam results finally ~~had~~ came. I'd been expecting
- 2 them for the last week. I knew I'd been done quite well, but I was
- 3 still nervous as I had opened the envelope. Before I'd had a chance to
- 4 look at them, my sister ran up and pulled them out of my hand! She
- 5 had read them out one by one. 'English A, maths A, biology A,
- 6 French A ...' This was the news I'd been waiting for. I'd got As in
- 7 every subject – even geography, which I hadn't been making sure
- 8 about! When Mum and Dad heard the news, they immediately started
- 9 been shouting with joy. By the time I'd had breakfast, Mum had
- 10 already called Grandma and Grandpa and had yet told the neighbours!