Past Perfect & Past Perfect Continuous

Grammar practice · B2 · Answers on the last page.

THE RULE

Past Perfect → had + past participle
An action finished *before* another past action.
When I arrived, the film had already started.

Past Perfect Continuous → had been + verb-ing
An action in progress (how long) before a past moment.
I was tired because I had been working all day.

Simple = a completed action or its result; **Continuous** = duration / ongoing activity (for, since, all since, all day).
Signals: already · just · never · by the time · after · before · because · for · since.

1 Complete with the Past Perfect (had + past participle).

1 When we got to the station, the train _____ (leave).

2 She _____ (never / see) snow before she moved to Canada.

3 They were happy because they _____ (win) the match.

4 I couldn't pay because I _____ (forget) my wallet.

5 By 2010, he _____ (write) three novels.

6 The streets were wet because it _____ (rain).

2 Complete with the Past Perfect Continuous (had been + -ing).

1 My eyes hurt because I _____ (read) for hours.

2 She was out of breath; she _____ (run).

3 They _____ (wait) for an hour when the bus finally came.

4 He was covered in paint because he _____ (decorate) the kitchen.

5 We were exhausted — we _____ (travel) all night.

3 Choose: Past Perfect simple or continuous?

1 When I arrived, she (had cooked / had been cooking) dinner — it was on the table.

2 His hands were dirty because he (had worked / had been working) in the garden.

3 By the time the police came, the thief (had escaped / had been escaping).

4 She was tired because she (hadn't slept / hadn't been sleeping) well for weeks.

5 I (had read / had been reading) the book, so I knew the ending.

6 They (had argued / had been arguing) for ages before they finally agreed.

4 Past Perfect or Past Simple? Put the verbs in the correct form.

1 After she _____ (finish) her homework, she _____ (go) out.

2 When I _____ (get) home, I realised I _____ (lose) my keys.

3 He _____ (not eat) all day, so he _____ (be) starving.

4 The concert _____ (already / start) when we _____ (arrive).

5 She _____ (feel) nervous because she _____ (never / fly) before.

6 They _____ (sell) the house before we _____ (make) an offer.

5 Find and correct the mistake in each sentence.

1 *When I arrived, the train already left.*

2 *She was tired because she had work all day.*

3 *By the time we got there, the shop has closed.*

4 *He had been finished the report before lunch.*

5 *They had being waiting for an hour.*

Soluciones

Answer key.

1 · Past Perfect

1 had left 2 had never seen 3 had won 4 had forgotten 5 had written 6 had rained

2 · Past Perfect Continuous

1 had been reading 2 had been running 3 had been waiting 4 had been decorating 5 had been travelling

3 · Simple or continuous?

1 had cooked 2 had been working 3 had escaped 4 hadn't been sleeping 5 had read 6 had been arguing

4 · Past Perfect or Past Simple?

1 had finished / went 2 got / had lost 3 hadn't eaten / was
4 had already started / arrived 5 felt / had never flown 6 had sold / made

5 · Error correction

1 … the train had already left. 2 … she had been working (had worked) all day.
3 … the shop had closed. 4 He had finished the report … 5 They had been waiting for an hour.