

Past Perfect

The past perfect is used to express that an action occurred in the past before another past action. Think of it in terms of two points of time in the past where the past perfect happens first. It can also convey that something started in the past and continued up to another point in the past.



● *past perfect* (point in time)

● *past perfect* (duration of time)

The past perfect is formed by using the simple past of the auxiliary verb *to have* followed by the past participle of the main verb. Unlike the present perfect, the auxiliary remains the same after every pronoun, including *he*, *she*, *it*.

Auxiliary verb (had) + Main verb (past participle)

I had been (I'd been)
She had seen (She'd seen)
They had walked (They'd walked)
We had heard (We'd heard)

It's important to learn how to form the affirmative, negative and interrogative of the past perfect.

Affirmative: **I had been to China before.....**

Negative: **I hadn't been to China before.....**

Interrogative: **Had you been to China before?**

The past perfect is usually used in a sentence with another verb that expresses a subsequent past action.

I had read the book before I saw the movie.

He had injured his foot before he played football.

Had you tried Thai food before you went to Thailand?

They had been in Spain for three years before they visited Madrid.

Had you been waiting long before I arrived?

Exercise 1: Show students the following five past perfect sentences that have errors. Have them discuss in groups what the errors are. When students are correcting the errors, have them explain why they are errors. CCQ throughout...

- 1. They have already ate dinner by the time we arrived.**
- 2. How long have you been in China before your brother visited?**
- 3. I had never be to the theatre before last night.**
- 4. Before she had called me I fell asleep.**
- 5. We met online before she had visited.**

Exercise 2: Have students ask each other the following questions and answer using the past perfect. Monitor for errors.

- 1. Why was he so angry today?**
- 2. Why were you so tired in class yesterday?**
- 3. Why weren't you at work yesterday?**
- 4. Why did they cancel the party?**
- 5. Why didn't they go to the football match?**

Exercise 3: Have students in groups practice finishing the following sentences using the past perfect.

1. When I got to class today.....
2. By the time we finished the project.....
3. I was out of cash because.....
4. I didn't want to leave because.....
5. By the time we arrived at the beach.....

Exercise 4: Have students complete the past perfect worksheet.

Speaking exercises:

Alibi game

Break the class into groups of suspects, and police who will interrogate them. The suspects have to discuss the details of their stories in pairs, covering as many details as possible about what they were doing at the time of the crime (e.g. one million dollars was stolen from the school last between 7pm and 9m). When they return to the class, they are questioned separately and the police make notes of their answers, trying to find inconsistencies in their stories. The use of past perfect and past simple should be encouraged by the teacher. Give some examples of how to order the sequence of event using pp and ps. Elicit more examples from Ss. Give examples of past perfect questions the police could ask. Elicit more examples from students.

The police decide who the criminals are based on the suspects' answers. Make sure they justify the choices using past perfect sentences.