

PAST PERFECT SIMPLE

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PAST PERFECT

FORM

[had + past participle]

- + You **had studied** English before you moved to New York.
- ? **Had** you **studied** English before you moved to New York?
- You **had not studied** English before you moved to New York.

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USE OF PAST PERFECT

It is used for an action taking place before a certain time in the past (putting emphasis only on the fact, not the duration)

Before I came here, I **had spoken** to Jack.
I was ill because I **had eaten** something bad.

Signal Words

already, just, never, not yet, once, until that day (with reference to the past, not the present)

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The Past Perfect expresses the idea that something occurred before another action in the past. It can also show that something happened before a specific time in the past.

- a) I **had never seen** such beautiful beaches before I went to Sardinia.
- b) I did not have any money because I **had lost** my wallet.
- c) Tony knew Paris so well because he **had visited** the city several times.

We don't need the Past Perfect when the sequence of events is clear:

- d) I **came** home and **turned** on my computer.

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DURATION BEFORE SOMETHING IN THE PAST (STATIVE VERBS)

With stative verbs, we use the Past Perfect to show that something started in the past and continued up until another action in the past.

- a) We **had had** that car for ten years before it broke down.
- b) By the time Alex finished his studies, he **had been** in London for over eight years.
- c) They felt bad about selling the house because they **had owned** it for more than forty years.

The verbs "live," "work," "teach," and "study" are sometimes used in this way even though they are NOT stative verbs.

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Positive Sentences in Past Perfect Simple

- 1) The pupils talked about the film they (watch).
- 2) I was late for work because I (miss) the bus.
- 3) We lived in the house that my father (build).
- 4) We admired the picture that Lucy (paint).
- 5) They watered the trees that they (plant).
- 6) The teacher corrected the tests that the pupils (write).
- 7) I received a good mark in my test because I (practise) a lot.
- 8) The mail order house did not send me the shirt that I (order).
- 9) I had to clean the floor because my cats (knock) over the flower pots.
- 10) My friend was in hospital because she (slip) on a banana skin.

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Negative Sentences in Past Perfect Simple

- 1) In the shopping centre, I met a friend who I (see / not) for ages.
- 2) The thief could walk right into the house because you (lock / not) the door.
- 3) We lost the match because we (practise / not) the days before.
- 4) At school, Jim quickly copied the homework that he (do / not).
- 5) We ate at a restaurant last night because I (buy / not) anything for dinner.
- 6) When we came back, it was cold in the house because Alice (close / not) the windows.
- 7) When I met Jane at eleven o'clock, she (have / not) breakfast yet.
- 8) I couldn't go to the cinema with my friends last night because I (finish / not) my homework yet.
- 9) Fred answered my question although I (ask / not) him.

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Questions in Past Perfect Simple

- 1) (what / Bob / do) that he was kept in after school?
- 2) (you / eat) anything before you went to the theatre?
- 3) (he / live) in London before he moved to Glasgow?
- 4) (she / find) a new job by that time?
- 5) (they / book) a room before they went to Dublin?
- 6) (how often / you / ring) the bell before he answered the door?
- 7) (why / they / have) dinner before they came to the party?
- 8) (Carlo / wash) the dishes when her mum came home?
- 9) (you / read) the contract before you signed it?
- 10) (who / live) in the house before we moved in?

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Put the verbs into the correct form (past perfect simple).

- 1) The storm destroyed the sandcastle that we (build).
- 2) He (not / be) to Cape Town before 1997.
- 3) When she went out to play, she (do / already) her homework.
- 4) My brother ate all of the cake that our mum (make).
- 5) The doctor took off the plaster that he (put on) six weeks before.
- 6) The waiter brought a drink that I (not / order).
- 7) I could not remember the poem we (learn) the week before.
- 8) The children collected the chestnuts that (fall) from the tree.
- 9) (he / phone) Angela before he went to see her in London?
- 10) She (not / ride) a horse before that day.

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1. I thought I knew her. I thought I (see) her before.
2. He (drive) only twice in his life before the accident.
3. Bonny no longer had her car. She (sell) it.
4. I saw Annabel last week. She (change) a lot.
5. Terry wasn't at home He (just go) out.
6. I tried to find Mr Jones but he wasn't around. Then I found out he (die).
7. He didn't need to borrow the car because he (have) his bike repaired.
8. Jenny (just get) home when the phone rang.
9. The new restaurant wasn't open any longer. It (close) down.
10. He fed the cat because no-one (feed) it for days.

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Put the verbs in brackets into the gaps in the correct tense - Past Perfect or Simple Past.

- 1) After Fred (*to spend*) his holiday in Italy he (*to want*) to learn Italian.
- 2) Jill (*to phone*) Dad at work before she (*to leave*) for her trip.
- 3) Susan (*to turn on*) the radio after she (*to wash*) the dishes.
- 4) When she (*to arrive*) the match already (*to start*).
- 5) After the man (*to come*) home he (*to feed*) the cat.
- 6) Before he (*to sing*) a song he (*to play*) the guitar.
- 7) She (*to watch*) a video after the children (*to go*) to bed.
- 8) After Eric (*to make*) breakfast he (*to phone*) his friend.
- 9) I (*to be*) very tired because I (*to study*) too much.
- 10) They (*to ride*) their bikes before they (*to meet*) their friends.

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Sources

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- http://www.adelescorner.org/grammar/past_perfect/past_perfect.html