

Past Perfect Tense

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Hi English learners. Welcome to a new lesson. We are going to learn how to use past perfect simple tense.

We use the past perfect simple to talk about an action which happened before another action or event.

- *When we arrived at the theatre, the play **had already started**. (the play started before we came)*
- *I saw a mirror on the floor. It **had fallen** from the wall. (it had fallen the night before)*
- *Michael didn't want to watch the movie because he **had watched** it before.*

The structure is:

HAD + past participle

- *Rob **had done** his homework.*
- *Rebecca **had gone** home.*

We use **had** for all persons and it can be shortened to **'d** (I'd, you'd, he'd, etc.)

Use the past perfect with the following conjunctions: *already, by the time, when, before, and after.*

- *I offered him the book but he'd **already** read it.*
- ***By the time** we arrived at the station, the bus had left.*
- ***When** I woke up my family had had breakfast.*
- *Someone had broken into the garage **before** we came.*
- ***After** he'd saved enough money, he bought a new computer.*

We usually use the past perfect in combination with the past simple tense to show the order of events. Here, it refers to the action which started in the past and continued up to the given moment in the past.

- *When I met him, he had already worked there for a year.*
- *Jane Austin had written six completed novels by the time she died.*
- *I rang the doorbell but nobody opened the door. They'd probably gone out.*

Other uses of present perfect

We use past perfect in the **third conditional** and after **"wish"**:

- *If they **had looked** at the weather forecast, they'd have put on warmer clothes.*

- *I wish I **had never met** my ex-boyfriend.*

Learn more about the third conditional [here](#)

Learn more about wishes and regrets [here](#).

We also use past perfect for **reporting** sentences in past simple and present perfect:

- *He said: "We went on a trip to Oxford yesterday"*
- *He told me that they had gone on a trip to Oxford yesterday.*
- *She said: "I've never been to the Maldives"*
- *She said that she had never been to the Maldives.*

Past perfect exercise:

1. When Paul arrived at the party, Sean home. (already/go)
2. When I arrived at the office, I realized that someone it during the night. (break into)
3. After he submitted the test, Mark realized that he a big mistake. (make)
4. Lucy was nervous because she on a ship before. (never/be)
5. I was sitting next to a man I Before. (never / see)
6. The clock didn't ring because he It. (not wind)
7. I was glad I met Ben because I him for years. (not see)
8. Monica couldn't come to the party because she to go somewhere else. (arrange)
9. Why didn't you reply to any of the emails I you? (send)
10. There was a man on the road who told us that his car (break down)

Answer key: 1. had already gone, 2. had broken into it, 3. had made, 4. had never been, 5. had never seen, 6. hadn't wind. 7. hadn't seen, 8. had arranged, 9. had sent, 10. had broken down