

# THE PAST PERFECT

## ACTIVITY TYPE

Reading, Writing, Grammar,  
Exercises

## LANGUAGE FOCUS

The past perfect

## AIM

To learn and practice the past  
perfect in English

## LEVEL

Intermediate, Advanced

## TIME

60 minutes

## INTRODUCTION

After going through your regular review and teacher talk, tell the students that they're going to learn the past perfect in English

## PREPARATION

Make one copy of the worksheet for each student

## PROCEDURE

Give one copy of the worksheet to each student.  
Go through the grammar and exercises together.

## WRAPUP

Ask the students if they have any doubts.  
Thank them for coming to the lesson.

# Past Perfect

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## FORM Past Perfect

[HAD] + [PAST PARTICIPLE]

## EXAMPLES:

I had studied a little English when I came to the U.S.

They had never met an American until they met John.

**NOTE:** When you are using a verb tense with more than one part such as Past Perfect (had met), adverbs often come between the first part and the second part (had never met).

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## USE 1 Completed Action Before Something in Past



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.

### EXAMPLES:

I had never seen such a beautiful beach before I went to Kauai.

Had you ever visited the U.S. before your trip in 1992?

Yes, I had been to the U.S. once before in 1988.

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## USE 2 Duration Before Something in the Past (Non-continuous Verbs)



With Non-*progressive* Verbs and some non-*progressive* uses of Mixed Verbs, we use the Past Perfect to show that something started in the past and continued up until another action in the past.

## EXAMPLES:

We had had that car for ten years before it broke down.

By the time Alex finished his studies, he had been in London for over eight years.

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## IMPORTANT Specific Times with the Past Perfect

Unlike the Present Perfect, it is possible to use specific time words or phrases with the Past Perfect. Although this is possible, it is usually not necessary.



## EXAMPLE:

She had visited her Japanese relatives once in 1993 before she moved in with them in 1996.

If the Past Perfect action did occur at a specific time, the Simple Past can be used instead of the Past Perfect when *before* or *after* is used in the sentence. The words *before* and *after* actually tell you what happens first so the Past Perfect is optional. Both sentences below are correct.

### EXAMPLE:

She had visited her Japanese relatives once in 1993 before she moved in with them in 1996.

She visited her Japanese relatives once in 1993 before she moved in with them in 1996.

### HOWEVER

If the Past Perfect action did not happen at a specific time, Past Perfect **MUST** be used at all times. Compare the two sentences below.



### EXAMPLE:

She had never seen a bear before she moved to Alaska. **Correct**

She never saw a bear before she moved to Alaska. **Not Correct**

## Exercises

*Complete the sentences with the verbs in brackets in Past Perfect.*

*Use contracted forms only when there are personal pronouns.*

**Example:**

Before Steven did his homework he \_\_\_\_\_ at the library. (to study)

Answer:

Before Steven did his homework he had studied at the library.

1. She \_\_\_\_\_ in Sweden before she went to Norway. (to live)
2. After we \_\_\_\_\_ the cornflakes, Henry came in. (to eat)
3. Before Ken ran to Kerry's house, he \_\_\_\_\_ him. (to phone)
4. After they \_\_\_\_\_ their backpacks, they rode away on their bikes. (to pack)
5. Gerry helped his grandma in the house because his father \_\_\_\_\_ him so. (to tell)



6. The cat hid under the chair because the children \_\_\_\_\_ so loud. (to be)
7. Before the students started to write, the teacher \_\_\_\_\_ their mobile phones. (to collect)
8. After Max \_\_\_\_\_ his breakfast, he left the flat. (to finish)
9. Laura repaired her glasses because her brother \_\_\_\_\_ them. (to break)
10. By the time the show began, all friends \_\_\_\_\_ . (to arrive)
11. It \_\_\_\_\_ to rain after we \_\_\_\_\_ to the station. (start / get)
12. We \_\_\_\_\_ the village where we \_\_\_\_\_ as children. (visit / live)
13. By the time we \_\_\_\_\_ the inn all the guests \_\_\_\_\_ . (reach / leave).
14. We \_\_\_\_\_ him just after he \_\_\_\_\_ news of his dismissal. (meet / get).
15. I said I \_\_\_\_\_ that play before. (see)
16. Nobody \_\_\_\_\_ where she \_\_\_\_\_ . (know / go)



17. They \_\_\_\_\_ dinner when we \_\_\_\_\_ .(finish / arrive)
18. He said that he already twice \_\_\_\_\_ our town. (visit)
19. We \_\_\_\_\_ to know which novels he \_\_\_\_\_ .(want / read)
20. They told us that the children \_\_\_\_\_ all the cake. (eat)
21. Why didn't you go to bed after you \_\_\_\_\_ supper? (have)
22. By that time we \_\_\_\_\_ your telegram. (already get)
23. She \_\_\_\_\_ all her money before her father \_\_\_\_\_ .(spend / come)
24. . Your letter \_\_\_\_\_ five minutes after he \_\_\_\_\_ .(come / leave)
25. I \_\_\_\_\_ him for the flowers he \_\_\_\_\_ me. (thank / send)
26. After we \_\_\_\_\_ writing we \_\_\_\_\_ in the garden. (finish / play)





27. Who \_\_\_\_\_ into the room after the telephone \_\_\_\_\_? (come / ring)
28. We couldn't \_\_\_\_\_ the door because he \_\_\_\_\_ our keys. (open / lose)
29. She \_\_\_\_\_ to cry when the light \_\_\_\_\_ out. (begin / go)
30. By the time I \_\_\_\_\_ him he \_\_\_\_\_ his studies. (meet / already finish)