

Past

Present

Future

Beginner

Past Perfect Tense

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:

1. I had never seen such a beautiful beach before I went to Kauai.
2. Had you ever visited the U.S. before your trip in 1992?
3. Yes, I had been to the U.S. once before in 1988.

Duration Before Something in the Past (Non-Continuous Verb)

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:

1. We had had that car for ten years before it broke down.
2. By the time Esaki finished his studies, he had been in London for over eight years.

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.

Beginner

Past Perfect Tense

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:

1. She had visited her Japanese relatives once in 1993 before she moved in with them in 1996.
2. 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:

1. She had never seen a bear before she moved to Alaska. **Correct**
2. She never saw a bear before she moved to Alaska. **Not Correct**

ACTIVE / PASSIVE FORMS Past Perfect

EXAMPLES

George had repaired many cars before he received his mechanics license.

ACTIVE

Many cars had been repaired by George before he received his mechanics license. **PASSIVE**