



Lesson 8 English Teachers On Call

Past Perfect Tense

I. RULES AND EXAMPLES

FORMAT: Past Perfect

PRONOUN / NOUN + [HAD] + [PAST PARTICIPLE]

Examples:

1. I had studied a little English when I came to the U.S.
2. 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).

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:

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.

2. 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 Alex 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.

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**

II. EXERCISES

2.1 Read the situations and write sentences from the words in brackets.

Example: You went to Sue's house, but she wasn't there. (she / go / out) _____.

Answer : She had gone out.

Start here:

1. You went back to your home town after many years. It wasn't the same as before. (it / change / a lot) _____.
2. I invited Rachel to the party, but she couldn't come. (She / arrange / to do something else) _____.
3. You went to the cinema last night. You got to the cinema late. (The film / already / begin) _____.
4. It was nice to see Dan again after such a long time. (I / not / see / him / for five years) _____.
5. I offered Sue something to eat, but she wasn't hungry. (she / just / have / breakfast) _____.

2.2 Put the verb into the correct form, past perfect (I had done) or past simple (I did).

Example: 'Was Paul at the party when you arrived?' 'No, he _____(go) home.'

Answer : 'No, he had gone home.'

Start here:

1. I felt very tired when I got home, so I _____ (go) straight to bed.
2. The house was very quiet when I got home. Everybody _____ (go) to bed.
3. Sorry, I'm late. The car _____ (break) down on my way here.
4. We were driving down the road when we _____ (see) a car which _____ (break) down, so we _____ (stop) to help.

2.3 Fill in the boxes with the correct form of the verb:

Simple Past / Past Perfect

I can't believe I (get) that apartment. I (submit) my application last week, but I didn't think I had a chance of actually getting it. When I (show) up to take a look around, there were at least twenty other people who (arrive) before me. Most of them (fill, already) out their applications and were already leaving. The landlord said I could still apply, so I did.

I (try) to fill out the form, but I couldn't answer half of the questions. They (want) me to include references, but I didn't want to list my previous landlord because I (have) some

problems with him and I knew he wouldn't recommend me. I (end)

_____ up listing my father as a reference.

It was total luck that he (decide) _____ to give me the apartment. It

turns out that the landlord and my father (go) _____ to high school together. He decided that I could have the apartment before he (look)

_____ at my credit report. I really lucked out!

III. WRITING

For each situation, write a sentence ending with never ... before.
Use the verb in brackets.

Example: The man sitting next to you on the plane was very nervous. It was his first flight. (fly) _____.

Answer : He had never flown before.

Start here:

1. A woman walked into the room. She was a complete stranger to me. (see) I _____ before.
2. Sam played tennis yesterday. He wasn't very good at it because it was his first game. (play) He _____.
3. Last year we went to Denmark. It was our first time there. (be there) We _____.
4. My cousin went to Canada last month. It was his first time there. (be there) He _____.
5. Tina played chess last Monday. She was very confused with it. (play) She _____.

IV. FREE TALKING

Let's talk Body and Health!

1. Is your body important to you?
2. Is your health important to you as well?
3. How healthy is your body today?
4. Tell why particular body parts are important.
5. Tell how to take care of your teeth, hands, hair, etc.
6. Tell about an accident or a time when you hurt yourself. Describe what happened to specific body parts. For example, "Last year, I broke my leg..."
7. Now, ask your teacher with the same questions.