

Past Perfect (*I had done*)

A

Study this example situation:



Sarah went to a party last week. Eric went to the party, too, but they didn't see each other. Eric left the party at 10:30, and Sarah got there at 11:00. So: When Sarah got to the party, Eric wasn't there. He **had gone** home.

Had gone is the *past perfect (simple)*:

I/we/they/you he/she/it	had	(= I'd, etc.) (= he'd, etc.)	gone seen finished, etc.
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The past perfect simple is **had + past participle** (gone/seen/finished, etc.)

Sometimes we talk about something that happened in the past:

- Sarah got to the party.

This is the starting point of the story. Then, if we want to talk about things that happened before this time, we use the past perfect (**had gone**):

- When Sarah got to the party, Eric **had** already gone home.

Here are some more examples:

- When we got home last night, we found that somebody **had broken** into our apartment.
- Karen didn't want to go to the movies with us because she **had** already seen the film.
- At first I thought I'd **done** the right thing, but I soon realized that I'd made a mistake.
- The man sitting next to me on the plane was very nervous. He **hadn't flown** before.
or . . . He **had** never flown before.

B

Compare **have done** (*present perfect*) and **had done** (*past perfect*):

present perfect

past | now

- Who is that woman? I've never seen her before.
- We aren't hungry. We've just had lunch.
- The house is dirty. They haven't cleaned it for weeks.

past perfect

past | now

- I didn't know who she was. I'd never seen her before. (= before that time)
- We weren't hungry. We'd just had lunch.
- The house was dirty. They hadn't cleaned it for weeks.

C

Compare the *past perfect* (**I had done**) and *simple past* (**I did**):

- "Was Ben at the party when you got there?" "No, he **had** already gone home."
- but "Was Ben at the party when you got there?" "Yes, but he **went** home soon afterward."
- Amy **had** just gotten home when I phoned. She **had** been at her mother's.
- but Amy **wasn't** at home when I phoned. She **was** at her mother's.

Exercises

14.1 Read the situations and write sentences using the words in parentheses.

1. You went to Jill's house, but she wasn't there.
(she / go / out) She had gone out.
2. You went back to your hometown after many years. It wasn't the same as before.
(it / change / a lot) _____
3. I invited Rachel to the party, but she couldn't come.
(she / make / plans to do something else) _____
4. It was nice to see Daniel again after such a long time.
(I / not / see / him for five years) _____
5. You went to the movies last night. You got there late.
(the movie / already / begin) _____
6. Sam played tennis yesterday. It was his first game, and he wasn't very good at it.
(he / not / play / before) _____
7. I offered Sue something to eat, but she wasn't hungry.
(she / just / have / breakfast) _____
8. Last year we went to Mexico. It was our first time there.
(we / never / be / there before) _____

14.2 Use the sentences on the left to complete the paragraphs on the right. These sentences are in the order in which they happened – so (a) happened before (b), (b) before (c), etc. But your paragraph should begin with the underlined sentence, so sometimes you will need the past perfect.

1. a) Somebody broke into the office during the night. We arrived at work in the morning and found that somebody had broken into the office during the night. So we
b) We arrived at work in the morning.
c) We called the police. _____
2. a) Ann went out. I tried to phone Ann this morning, but
b) I tried to phone her this morning. _____ no answer.
c) There was no answer. She _____ out.
3. a) Jim came back from vacation a few days ago. I met Jim a few days ago. He _____ just _____
b) I met him the same day. He _____
c) He looked relaxed.
4. a) Kevin wrote to Sally many times. Yesterday Kevin _____
b) She never answered his letters. He _____ very surprised.
c) Yesterday he got a phone call from her. He _____ many times,
d) He was very surprised. but she _____

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

1. "Was Ben at the party when you got there?" "No, he had gone (go) home."
2. I felt very tired when I got home, so I _____ (go) straight to bed.
3. The house was very quiet when I got home. Everybody _____ (go) to bed.
4. "Sorry I'm late. The car _____ (break) down on my way here."
5. We were driving on the highway when we _____ (see) a car that _____ (break) down, so we _____ (stop) to see if we could help.