

English With Nimafar

Past Perfect (Continuous)

Overview:

The **Past Perfect** and **Past Perfect Continuous** tenses help us express past events that happened before another past action or time.

By the end of this lesson, you'll be better able to use these tenses naturally and confidently in conversations! 🎯

Date:

02/28/2025

◆ What Are These Tenses? 🤔

The **Past Perfect** (had + past participle) is used to describe an action **completed before** another past action.

The **Past Perfect Continuous** (had been + verb-ing) emphasizes the **duration** of an action before another past event.

✓ Examples:

- By the time she arrived, we **had finished** dinner. 🍴
- He **had been studying** for hours before the test. 📚

◆ Why Do We Use These Tenses? 📅

◆ Past Perfect (had + past participle)

We use the **Past Perfect** to show which of two past actions happened first.

✓ Examples:

- She **had left** before I arrived. 🚗
- By 10 PM, they **had gone** to bed. 🛏️

◆ Past Perfect Continuous (had been + verb-ing)

We use the **Past Perfect Continuous** to emphasize **the duration** of an action before another past event.

✓ Examples:

- She **had been working** for 5 years before she got promoted. 📁
- We **had been waiting** for an hour when the bus finally came. 🚌

◆ Structure & Formation

◆ Past Perfect (Affirmative, Negative & Questions)

| Sentence Type | Structure | Example |
|----------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| ✓ Affirmative | Subject + had + past participle | She had finished her work. |
| ✗ Negative | Subject + had not (hadn't) + past participle | I hadn't seen him before. |
| ? Question | Had + subject + past participle? | Had you met him before? |

◆ Past Perfect Continuous (Affirmative, Negative & Questions)

| Sentence Type | Structure | Example |
|----------------------|--|---|
| ✔ Affirmative | Subject + had been + verb-ing | He had been running for an hour. |
| ✗ Negative | Subject + had not been + verb-ing | We hadn't been waiting long. |
| ? Question | Had + subject + been + verb-ing? | Had she been studying ? |

◆ Common Time Expressions ⏳

Past Perfect and Past Perfect Continuous often use these expressions:

- ✔ **By + specific time** → *By 2010, they had moved to Canada.* 🇨🇦
- ✔ **Before/After + past action** → *She left before I had arrived.* 🏠
- ✔ **For + duration** → *He had been working for 2 hours when I called.* ☎️
- ✔ **Since + point in time** → *They had been living there since 1990.* 🏠

◆ Past Perfect vs. Past Simple 🤔

| Situation | Past Simple | Past Perfect |
|---|--|---|
| ✔ One completed action in the past | <i>I ate breakfast at 8 AM.</i> | - |
| ✔ Two past actions (one happened before the other) | - | <i>I had eaten breakfast before she arrived.</i> |

🚩 **Common Mistake:**

- ✗ *I ate before she arrived.* → *This does NOT clearly show which action happened first.*
- ✔ *I **had eaten** before she arrived.* 🎯

◆ Past Perfect vs. Past Perfect Continuous 🤯

| Situation | Past Perfect | Past Perfect Continuous |
|---|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emphasis on completion | I had finished my work before noon. | - |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emphasis on duration | - | I had been working all morning. |

🚩 Common Mistake:

✗ *She had been finishing her work before she left.*

✓ *She **had finished** her work before she left.* 🎯

◆ Special Uses of Past Perfect Tenses 🚀

🚩 Unreal Past (Wishes & Conditionals)

- I wish I **had studied** harder. (But I didn't.) 😞
- If she **had left earlier**, she wouldn't have missed the flight. ✈️

🚩 Reported Speech

- "I saw him," → She said she **had seen** him. 🗣️

◆ Advanced Notes 🧠

🚀 Tricky Cases & Exceptions

◆ Past Perfect with "just"

- *He had just left when I arrived.* (Very recently)

◆ Past Perfect Continuous with "how long"

- *How long had you been waiting?*

◆ Non-Continuous Verbs Don't Use Past Perfect Continuous

✗ *She had been knowing the answer.* → ✓ *She had known the answer.*

🎯 Summary Table

| <i>Tense</i> | <i>Structure</i> | <i>Usage</i> | <i>Example</i> |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| <i>Past Perfect</i> | <i>had + past participle</i> | <i>Completed action before another past event</i> | <i>I had finished before they arrived.</i> |
| <i>Past Perfect Continuous</i> | <i>had been + verb-ing</i> | <i>Ongoing action before another past event</i> | <i>I had been studying for hours before the test.</i> |

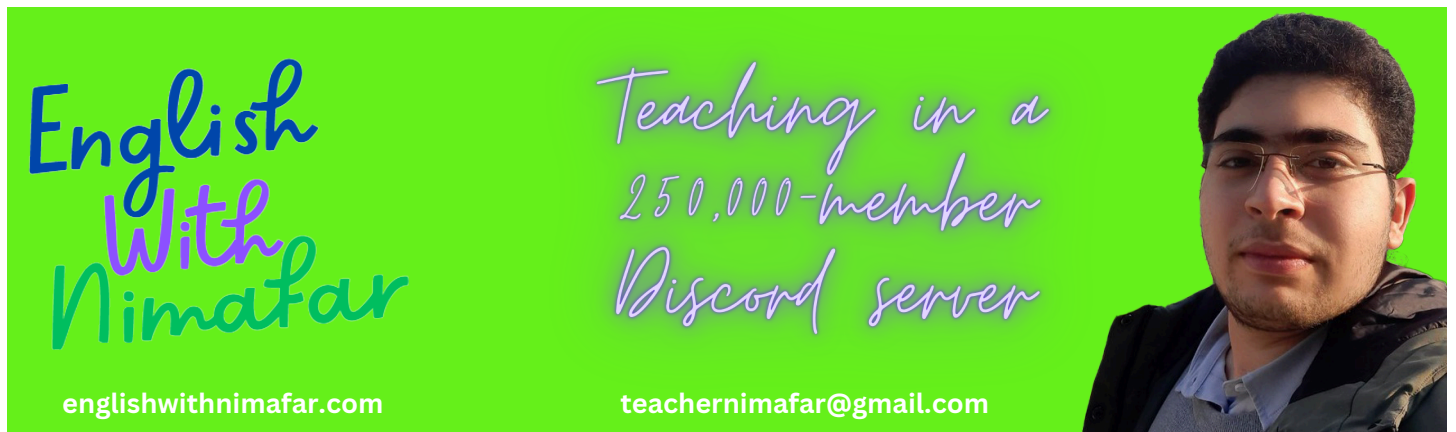
Examples

1. She **had never seen** such a beautiful sunset before that day. 🌅
2. **Had** they **been waiting** long when the train finally arrived? 🚂
3. By the time I got home, my brother **had already eaten** all the pizza. 🍕
4. He was exhausted because he **had been running** for two hours. 🏃
5. The police arrested the suspect after they **had discovered** new evidence. 🔍
6. We **hadn't finished** our homework when the teacher asked for it. 📖
7. **Had** she **been crying** before you saw her? Her eyes were red. 😭
8. Before moving to Spain, they **had lived** in France for ten years. 🇫🇷
9. The streets were wet because it **had been raining** all night. 🌧️
10. I **had never thought** about that possibility until you mentioned it. 🤔
11. The match **had already started** when we arrived at the stadium. ⚽
12. The concert was canceled because the band **hadn't arrived** on time. 🎵
13. Why **hadn't** you **told** me about the meeting earlier? ⌚
14. By the time she woke up, her flight **had already left**. ✈️
15. He **had been practicing** the piano for years before his first performance. 🎹
16. The guests were annoyed because we **hadn't prepared** enough food. 🍴
17. **Had** you **ever traveled** abroad before your 18th birthday? 🌍
18. When we entered the house, we saw that someone **had broken** the window. 🏠
19. The ground was muddy because it **had been raining** heavily. 🌧️
20. They **had been working** at the same company before they started their own business. 💼
21. The dog was tired because it **had been playing** in the park all day. 🐕
22. **Had** he **ever met** a celebrity before that night? 🎬
23. She looked pale because she **hadn't eaten** anything all day. 🍽️
24. The shop **had closed** by the time we got there. 🚪
25. Why **had** they **been arguing** so loudly before we arrived? 😡

26. We **had never expected** the test to be so difficult. 📝
27. By the time we reached the cinema, the movie **had already begun**. 🎬
28. The cake was delicious because she **had spent** hours baking it. 🍰
29. My grandmother **had never flown** on a plane before last year. ✈️
30. **Had you been working** out before you got injured? 🏋️♂️
31. He was angry because he **had been waiting** for us for over an hour. 🕒
32. The scientist **had discovered** a new element before retiring. 🔬
33. She was exhausted because she **hadn't slept** the night before. 😴
34. We realized we **had left** the keys inside the car. 🚗
35. **Had she been studying** all night before the exam? 📖
36. Before I called you, I **had sent** an email. ✉️
37. The train **hadn't arrived** on time because of the storm. 🌩️
38. By the time I found my phone, my friend **had already called** three times. 📞
39. His hands were dirty because he **had been fixing** his bike. 🚲
40. They were confused because the teacher **hadn't explained** the topic well. 🤔

JOIN MY [TELEGRAM CHANNEL](#)

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED FOR [ENGLISHWITHNIMAFAR.COM](#) AND **NIMAFAR**



English
With
Nimafar

Teaching in a
250,000-member
Discord server

englishwithnimafar.com

teachernimafar@gmail.com