

# Past Perfect Progressive

## Table of Contents

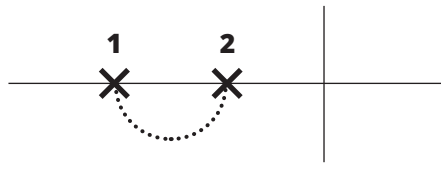
- 2**     **Grammar Notes**  
Past Perfect Progressive /  
Past Perfect Vs. Past Perfect Progressive
  
- 5**     **Exercise 1**  
Fill in the Blanks
  
- 6**     **Exercise 2**  
Find the Error
  
- 7**     **Exercise 3**  
Past Perfect Progressive Sentences
  
- 8**     **Exercise 4**  
Past Perfect Vs. Past Perfect Progressive
  
- 9**     **Exercise 5**  
Pair Work
  
- 10**    **Exercise 6**  
Quiz

# Grammar Notes

## A. The Past Perfect Progressive

The past perfect progressive (also called the *past perfect continuous*) is used for discussing two past actions, where the first action continues to the second action.

The past perfect progressive is not that common in English, but it is needed occasionally in formal speaking and writing.

<b>Tense</b>	<b>Past Perfect Progressive</b>
<b>Diagram</b>	
<b>Form</b>	had + been + -ing verb
<b>Function</b>	Two actions occurred in the past. The first (long) action continued to the second (short) action.
<b>Time Markers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• by the time</li> <li>• when</li> <li>• before</li> </ul> <p>(Note that <i>for</i> and <i>since</i> are also commonly used to indicate the duration of the first action.)</p>
<b>Examples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I <b>had been studying</b> for two hours by the time he called me last night.</li> <li>• We <b>had been waiting</b> for more than three weeks when the package finally arrived.</li> <li>• Before I completed the presentation, I <b>had been talking</b> for over an hour.</li> </ul>

### Note #1

When forming the past perfect in English, the independent clause uses **had + been + -ing verb** and the dependent clause takes the **simple past**.

Remember that the dependent clause can come before or after the independent clause. When it comes before the independent clause, use a comma.

- She had been talking for two hours **by the time he asked to use the phone.**
- **By the time he asked to use the phone,** she had been talking for two hours.

## Grammar Notes cont.

### A. The Past Perfect Progressive cont.

#### Note #2

Sometimes the dependent clause is just an adverb phrase of time and not a complete sentence with a past verb. Examples of typical phrases include *by July 2010*, *by 6:00 last night*, etc.

- **By August 1998**, she had been living in California for eight years.
- They had been preparing for the meeting for 24 hours **by 10:00 am yesterday**.

#### Note #3

The past perfect progressive is quite formal. Often, in informal speaking and writing, the past progressive can be used instead with the same meaning.

- We **had been waiting** for two hours when he arrived. (*formal*)
- We **were waiting** for two hours when he arrived. (*informal*)

#### Note #4

This verb tense has three parts to it! Here's how it is formed:

**Past Perfect** = had + past participle (e.g., *had studied*)

**Progressive** = be + -ing verb (e.g., *be studying*)

**The Past Participle of Be** (the first part of the progressive form) = been

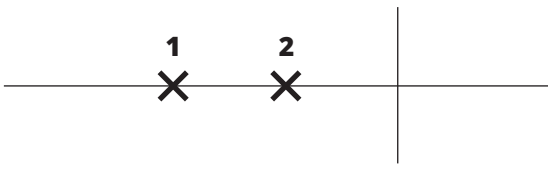
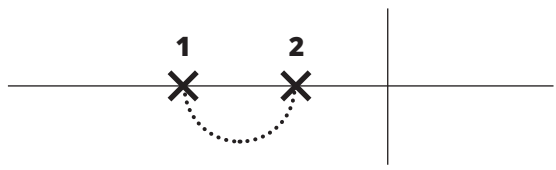
**Final Result** = had + been + -ing verb

<b>Past Perfect</b>	had +	past participle	
<b>Progressive</b>	↓	be +	-ing verb
<b>Past Perfect Progressive</b>	had +	been +	-ing verb
<b>Example</b>	I had been studying.		

## Grammar Notes cont.

### B. The Past Perfect Vs. The Past Perfect Progressive

How can we tell when the past perfect tense is needed instead of the past perfect progressive? With the past perfect, two past actions happen at different times. The first action was finished before the second one occurred. Compare these two tenses in the chart below.

Tense	Past Perfect	Past Perfect Progressive
Diagram		
Form	had + past participle	had + been + -ing verb
Function	The first past action <b>finished</b> before the second past action.	The first past action <b>continued</b> until the second past action.
Time Markers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• by the time</li> <li>• when</li> <li>• before</li> <li>• after</li> </ul> <p>(Note: The typical past markers <i>last, yesterday, and ago</i> are often additionally used.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• by the time</li> <li>• when</li> <li>• before</li> </ul> <p>(Note: The typical progressive markers <i>for and since</i> are often additionally used.)</p>
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My friend <b>had texted</b> me five times before I answered.</li> <li>• I <b>had finished</b> dinner by the time he called me last night.</li> <li>• By the time she got home, someone <b>had fixed</b> the door.</li> <li>• <b>Had</b> you already <b>made</b> plans when I invited you for coffee yesterday?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My sister <b>had been studying</b> English for 11 years before she entered university.</li> <li>• We <b>had been waiting</b> since 5:00 pm when she finally arrived two hours later.</li> <li>• When he called me at midnight, I <b>hadn't been sleeping</b> for very long.</li> <li>• <b>Had</b> you <b>been travelling</b> all night by the time you got to your hotel?</li> </ul>

# Exercise 1

## FILL IN THE BLANKS

Write the past perfect progressive form of the verbs in parentheses.

Ex. By the time she called me, I had been doing my homework for three hours.  
 (do)

1. She \_\_\_\_\_ university for six years before she graduated.  
 (attend)
2. He \_\_\_\_\_ for nine hours by 8:00 am.  
 (sleep)
3. By the time she got to my house, I \_\_\_\_\_ for ages.  
 (clean)
4. We \_\_\_\_\_ for 45 minutes before you joined us.  
 (hang out)
5. I \_\_\_\_\_ here long before I moved to a new apartment.  
 (live, not)
6. My friend \_\_\_\_\_ at our company for eight years before he quit.  
 (work)
7. The security guard \_\_\_\_\_ the building all night by the time I got to the office.  
 (patrol)
8. By 11:00 pm last night, we \_\_\_\_\_ for only an hour.  
 (sleep)
9. \_\_\_\_\_ he \_\_\_\_\_ long when she finally arrived?  
 (wait)
10. \_\_\_\_\_ the children \_\_\_\_\_ quietly before their mother got home?  
 (play)

## Exercise 2

### FIND THE ERROR

Find one error in each sentence and correct it on the line below.

Ex. By the time my friend arrive, I had been watching TV for two and a half hours.

*By the time my friend arrived, I had been watching TV for two and a half hours.*

---

1. My parents had travelling for six months when their motor home broke down.

---

2. By the time John had been getting home, his roommates had been watching the game for an hour.

---

3. She had been studied English for ten years when she graduated.

---

4. You have been playing the drums for eight years by the time you turned 18.

---

5. Jacob had been living in China for five months before he returns home.

---

6. I had been reading for half an hour by time she came over.

---

7. By the time my daughter turned 19, I had been teaching her to drive since three years.

---

8. The staff members have been working for nine hours straight by the time their manager got back to the office.

---

## Exercise 3

### PAST PERFECT PROGRESSIVE SENTENCES

Write sentences using the past perfect progressive tense. The first sentence should start with a dependent clause, and the second should start with an independent clause. Watch your punctuation.

Ex. We / go / on vacation / it / rain / two weeks

*By the time we went on vacation, it had been raining for two weeks.*

---

*It had been raining for two weeks by the time we went on vacation.*

---

1. They / ask / directions / they / drive around / hours

---

---

2. This time last week / Lisa / lie / in bed with the flu / six days

---

---

3. She / 25 / she / speak / three languages / for a decade

---

---

4. He / get hired / my brother / look for a job / seven months

---

---

5. They / reach / an agreement / the rival companies / negotiate / 72 hours

---

---

6. She / get / black belt / my daughter / take / karate lessons / 2011

---

---

## Exercise 4

### PAST PERFECT VS. PAST PERFECT PROGRESSIVE

Write the verbs in parentheses in the past perfect or past perfect progressive tense.

- Ex. By the time my coworker bought a new car, she had been taking the bus for 11 years.  
(take)
1. My friends \_\_\_\_\_ to the party by the time I got home.  
(go)
  2. They \_\_\_\_\_ for months when their moving day finally arrived.  
(pack)
  3. Everyone \_\_\_\_\_ the office by the time I finished work.  
(leave)
  4. My son \_\_\_\_\_ at home for 18 years by the time he left for university.  
(live)
  5. When the doctor finally saw me, I \_\_\_\_\_ for an hour and a half.  
(wait)
  6. By this time last month, she \_\_\_\_\_ at this company for 12 years.  
(work)
  7. My neighbour \_\_\_\_\_ his deck for a week before I complained about the noise.  
(renovate)
  8. \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_ eating before they came over?  
(finish)
  9. By the time the ceremony was over, we \_\_\_\_\_ that we wouldn't go again next year.  
(decide)
  10. \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_ here long before the meeting started?  
(sit)

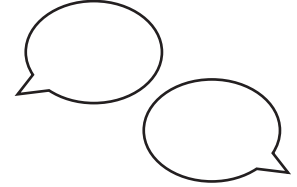


# Exercise 5

## PAIR WORK

### A. Speaking

Think back on your life so far. What had you accomplished at age 10, 15, 16, 19, 20, etc.? Tell your partner about some of the things you'd done at certain ages. Use the past perfect and the past perfect progressive.

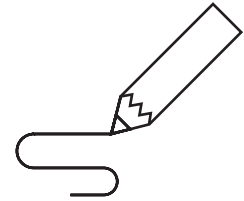


#### Examples:

- When I graduated from high school, I had been studying English for five years.
- I had travelled to Europe twice by the time I was 15.

### B. Writing

Now write down several of the accomplishments that your partner told you about.



#### Example:

- By the time my partner was 30, she had been going to the gym for six years.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Exercise 6

### QUIZ

Circle the correct verb tense for each sentence.

1. Mark \_\_\_\_\_ sick for an hour before his boss sent him home.
  - a) had been feeling
  - b) had been feel
  - c) had being feeling
  - d) had be feel
2. By the time our kids finished their homework, the sun \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) had been setting
  - b) setting
  - c) set
  - d) had set
3. By the time she \_\_\_\_\_, he had already left.
  - a) calls
  - b) called
  - c) had called
  - d) had been calling
4. They \_\_\_\_\_ shopping by the time the mall closed.
  - a) hadn't finished
  - b) hadn't been finishing
  - c) are not finished
  - d) are not finishing
5. My friend had been helping me with my homework all night before she \_\_\_\_\_ asleep.
  - a) felt
  - b) falling
  - c) fell
  - d) fall
6. By the time you \_\_\_\_\_ me up, I had been sleeping for nine hours.
  - a) wake
  - b) woken
  - c) had woken
  - d) woke
7. Before I finished my report, I \_\_\_\_\_ it for over a week.
  - a) wrote
  - b) had written
  - c) am writing
  - d) had been writing
8. She \_\_\_\_\_ to get an appointment for days by the time a spot opened up.
  - a) had been trying
  - b) had tried
  - c) had trying
  - d) tried
9. They were happy that they \_\_\_\_\_ their house before the end of the year.
  - a) had selling
  - b) had sold
  - c) were sold
  - d) had been selling
10. Her dog \_\_\_\_\_ for two days by the time she took it to the vet.
  - a) hadn't be eating
  - b) had been eating
  - c) hadn't been eating
  - d) had be eating