



## Unit 6 – Past Perfect & Past Perfect Continuous (*I had done.. I had been doing..*)

A) The **past perfect** tense expresses a past action that was finished when another past action or event occurred. The **past perfect continuous** describes a past action that continued for a period of time before another action or event occurred. This action may or may not have continued past that point (but did not continue until now).

	Past Perfect (PP)	Past Perfect Continuous (PPC)
<b>Pattern:</b>	<u>Action 1</u> : had + p.p. (past participle) <u>Action 2</u> : the simple past	<u>Action 1</u> : had + been + verb( <i>ing</i> ) <u>Action 2</u> : the simple past
<b>Purpose:</b>	Action 1 finished <u>before</u> Action 2 in the past.	Action 1 continued <u>until</u> Action 2 and may have continued past that point (but ended before now).
<b>Time Expressions:</b>	Time expressions provide additional information: -> <i>by the time / when / before / after</i>	The PPC often uses the following time expressions: -> <i>by the time / when / before</i>
<b>Example:</b>	-> I <b>had visited</b> New York twice <b>by the time</b> I got my first job there. -> There is an emphasis on the result.	-> I <b>had been working</b> in New York for six months <b>when</b> I received my first promotion. -> There is an emphasis on the time period.
<b>Chart:</b>		
<b>Notes:</b>	-> to provide additional context; <i>last week, yesterday, ago</i> , etc. are often added	-> the additional time markers <i>for &amp; since</i> are most often used to express <u>duration</u>

**Note:** -> In casual, spoken conversation, we sometimes hear both the PP and PPC used to express the same idea. This often depends on whether the speaker (or writer) wishes to focus on the **result (PP)** or the **time period (PPC)**.

- o I needed a break because I **had studied / had been studying** a lot all day.
- o Everyone **had had / had been having** a great time when the party finished.

### B) Further Differences:

Past Perfect (PP)	Past Perfect Continuous (PPC)
Shows two past events that are linked to one another:	Shows the cause of the past action:
o I couldn't take my flight because I <b>had forgotten</b> my passport at home.	o We were tired because <b>we had been driving</b> all night to avoid traffic.

**Note:** -> we usually use the simple past to refer to the more recent action:

- o By the time we **arrived** at the station, the train **had already left**. 'arrived' = more recent action
- o My sister **had set** the table before we all **sat down** together to eat. 'sat down' = more recent action

### C) Past Continuous vs Past Perfect Continuous – note the differences between these patterns:

i) **Past Continuous** – used to express interrupted actions in the past; a longer action or event is interrupted by a shorter one. There is no information given about the process before the interruption.

ii) **Past Perfect Continuous** – remember, this tense focuses on 'the duration of the past action.' For example:

- o When I **arrived**, Lisa **was looking** for her wallet. -> *duration is not mentioned*
- o She **had been looking** for her wallet for two hours when I arrived. -> *duration = two hours*
- o While we **were meeting**, somebody **knocked on** the door.
- o We **had been meeting** for 20 minutes when somebody **knocked on** the door.

### D) Repeated Actions – The past perfect tense is used to indicate how many times an event occurred in the past:

- o How many rounds of golf **had you played** before you got your first birdie? not: ~~had you been playing~~
- o We **had slept** on the floor many times when we were young. not: ~~had been sleeping~~

### E) Mental States – Remember that stative verbs such as *liked, loved, known*, etc. are not used with the PPC:

-> We **had known** each other for three years before we got married. not: ~~had been knowing~~



## Unit 6 – Exercises:

6.1 – Complete the sentences with the following verbs. Determine whether they are in the **PP** or **PPC** form. **(6-A/B)**

drive / travel / date / eat / get / paint / drink / wait

1. We **had been driving** for 10 minutes when we saw the accident.
2. When Shelly finally arrived, we \_\_\_\_\_ for over half an hour.
3. Steve and Dana \_\_\_\_\_ for two years when they got engaged.
4. Sam gained some weight in 2020 because he \_\_\_\_\_ too much during the pandemic.
5. Before she went to bed last night, Kelly \_\_\_\_\_ a whole bottle of wine.
6. The bus \_\_\_\_\_ for over 10 hours when we arrived in San Francisco.
7. Jennifer \_\_\_\_\_ a full time job before she finished university.
8. We \_\_\_\_\_ the whole house before we sold it last year.

6.2 – Write the verbs in brackets in either the **past continuous** or **present perfect continuous** form. **(6-C)**

1. While I **was walking** home last night, I saw an accident at an intersection. (walk)
2. How long \_\_\_\_\_ French before you decided to move to Paris? (study)
3. I \_\_\_\_\_ lunch when Michelle walked into the restaurant. (have)
4. Sandra \_\_\_\_\_ anything special all day when we invited her out with us. (not/do)
5. What \_\_\_\_\_ on tv last night when I called you? (watch)
6. Before she moved back home, Kylie \_\_\_\_\_ at a private school for two years. (teach)
7. How long \_\_\_\_\_ for Justin before he arrived last night? (wait)

6.3 – Join the two sentences together using the **time linkers** provided in brackets. **(6-A/B)**

1. Mary did the dishes. Then she watched a movie with us. (after)  
**Mary watched a movie with us after she had done the dishes.**
2. Mark finished his report. A short while later, his computer stopped working. (before)  
\_\_\_\_\_.
3. Laura arrived at the bus stop. Wendy was waiting for over 40 minutes. (by the time)  
\_\_\_\_\_.
4. Shawn left school. Then he realized that he forgot his bag. (after)  
\_\_\_\_\_.
5. The thieves escaped. A while later, the police arrived. (by the time)  
\_\_\_\_\_.

6.4 – Put the verbs into either the **past perfect** or **past perfect continuous** form. **(6-A/B)**

1. The game \_\_\_\_\_ already \_\_\_\_\_ by the time we arrived at the stadium. (start)
2. Bill had to leave because he \_\_\_\_\_ to pick up Molly from the airport. (arrange)
3. Ben got fired recently. He \_\_\_\_\_ for a rival company for over three years. (spy)
4. Her throat was sore because she \_\_\_\_\_ for hours at the party last night. (talk)
5. Before you arrived today, Thomas \_\_\_\_\_ the presentation. (finish)
6. We went to New York last month. We \_\_\_\_\_ about it for years. (dream)
7. Jenn started her own company in 2015 after she \_\_\_\_\_ money from a bank. (borrow)

6.5 – Complete the sentences with your own ideas using the **past perfect** or **present perfect continuous** tense.

1. My friend's eyes were red today. She \_\_\_\_\_.
2. We were exhausted because \_\_\_\_\_.
3. When he had the accident, he \_\_\_\_\_.
4. I wasn't interested in lunch because \_\_\_\_\_.
5. By the time my friend arrived, I \_\_\_\_\_.