



4. PAST PERFECT CONTINUOUS tense (P.P.C.t)

USAGES:

1. Duration Before Something in the Past.



⇒ We use “Past Perfect Continuous” to show that

something started in the past and continued up until another time in the past. “For five minutes” and “for two weeks” are both durations which can be used with the Past Perfect Continuous.

⇒ Notice that this is related to the Present Perfect Continuous; however, the duration does not continue until now, it stops before something else in the past.

Examples:

- They **had been talking** for over an hour before Dave arrived.
- How long had you **been waiting** to get on the train?
- He **had been working** at that company for four years when it went out of business.
- Martha wanted to sit down because he **had been standing** all day at work.
- John **had been teaching** at the university for more than a year before he left for Asia.

2. Cause of Something in the Past:



Using the ‘Past Perfect Continuous’ before another action in the past is a good way to show cause and effect.

Examples:

- Johnson was tired because he **had been jogging**.
- Smith gained weight because he **had been overeating**.
- Billy failed the final test because he **had not been attending** class.

Past Continuous vs. Past Perfect Continuous

If you do not include a duration such as ‘for five minutes’ ‘for two weeks’ or ‘since Friday’ many English speakers choose to use the Past Continuous rather than the Past Perfect Continuous. Be careful because this can change the meaning of the sentence. Past Continuous emphasizes interrupted actions, whereas Past Perfect Continuous emphasizes duration of time before something in the past. Study the examples below to understand the difference.

Examples:

- David was tired because he **was exercising** so hard.
This sentence emphasizes that he was tired because he was exercising at that exact moment.
- Dave was tired because he **had been exercising** so hard.
This sentence emphasizes that he was tired because he had been exercising over a period of time. It is possible that he was still exercising at that moment OR that he had just finished.





Grammatical Detail pRaCTiCe

GT|PS|PC|PPS|PPC|PSP|PCP|PPSP|PPCP||
PrS|PrC|PrPS|PrPC|PrSP|PrCP|PrPSP|PrPCP|||FT



FORMS:

+ **Positive form:** Subject + had + been + present participle + (obj).

Example: They had been visiting their parents.

- **Negative form:** Sub+ had+ not+ been+ present participle+ (obj).

Examples: She and her mum hadn't been going home.
I had not been travelling to the mountain.
You hadn't been sleeping well.

P **Question form:** Had + Sub + been + present participle + (obj)?

Examples: Had he been coming here?
Had Paul been driving his car?

A **Short Answer:** Yes, + Sub + had. No, + Sub + had not.

Examples: Yes, he had. No, he had not.
Yes, Paul had. No, he hadn't.

EXERCISES PRACTICE:

A, Please use positive sentences to make negative and question sentences.

Positive	Negative	Question
-I had been listening.::
-You had been listening.::
-We had been listening.::
-They had been listening.::
-He had been listening.::
-She had been listening.::
-It had been listening.::



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B, Please complete the sentences by using the verbs in the parentheses in past perfect continuous.

1. The dog (bark) had been barking for seven minutes before I got up.
2. The fly (fly) since I stayed in the room.
3. My sister (not cook) for seven months.
4. your father (work) in the office?
5. Everybody (teach) him for over a year when I met him.
6. I lived there because my sponsor (support) me.
7. She wasn't here because she (go) to her hometown.
8. They had more money because they (save) their money.
9. He got well because doctor (heal) him.
10. She passed her exam because she (study) so hard.
11. Jitney was slim because she (do) for over 3 years.

C, Cross the wrong answer with sentences below with past perfect continuous

1. My dad was rich because he (~~had been spending~~ | *had been earning*) hard.
2. Kids grew up fast because they (*'d been eating* | *'d not been sleeping*) more.
3. He spoke English well because he (*had been speaking* | *had never been speaking*) more with every English speaker.
4. She became a famous singer because she (*had been singing well with her natural voice.* | *had been speaking the polite words*).
5. She was more beautiful because she (*had never been making up* | *had always been making up*).
6. They had high confidence because they (*had been being strong* | *had been practicing*).
7. The police caught the robbers because they (*had been inquiring more* | *had sometimes been discussing*).
8. He stole my motor because he (*hadn't been following up me* | *had always been following up me*).
9. They were very poor because they (*had always been working hard* | *had always been sleeping*).



**D, Please circle the best form of past perfect continuous.**

1. We and our parents to Sihanouk Ville.
a. have been visiting b. hadn't been visiting **c. had been visiting**
2. She met him because I him to her house.
a. had been called b. had been calling c. had called
3. Defer at Cambridge University.
a. had been studying b. had studied c. had been studied
4. Soddy and Eddy became a manager because they very hard in their lives.
a. had working b. had been working c. had worked
5. Father and mother the children for over 18 years.
a. had been feeding b. had been helping c. had been giving
6. My baby was pretty because my wife and I a lot of beautiful pictures.
a. had been buying b. had been looking at c. had been drawing

E, Put the verbs into the correct form (past perfect continuous).

1. We (sleep) **had been sleeping** for 12 hours when he woke us up.
2. They (wait) at the station for 90 minutes when the train finally arrived.
3. We (look for) her ring for two hours and then we found it in the bathroom.
4. I (not / walk) for a long time, when it suddenly began to rain.
5. How long (learn / she) English before she went to London?
6. Frank Sinatra caught the flu because he (sing) in the rain too long.
7. He (drive) less than an hour when he ran out of petrol.
8. They were very tired in the evening because they (help) on the farm all day.
9. I (not / work) all day; so I wasn't tired and went to the disco at night.
10. They (cycle) all day so their legs were sore in the evening.



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F, Directions: Put the two activities together in one sentence by using the past perfect continuous. Make sure you use the time information. You may add words, such as because or after. There may be more than one answer. The first one has been done for you.

1. **First:** It snowed all morning. **Second:** The kids went outside to make a snowman.

Answer: Before the kids went outside, it had been snowing all morning.

2. **First:** She loved him for a year. **Second:** They had their first date.

Answer:

3. **First:** I studied French for 2 years. **Second:** I visited France.

Answer:

4. **First:** Trudy drove for 12 straight hours. **Second:** She had an accident.

Answer:

5. **First:** The doctor was trained for 4 years. **Second:** He opened his own office.

Answer:

6. **First:** I believed you. **Second:** Sam told me the truth.

Answer:

7. **First:** Diane watched TV all afternoon. **Second:** Her eyes were itchy.

Answer:

8. **First:** Columbus sailed for more than 2 months. **Second:** He and his 90 sailors saw North America.

Answer:

9. **First:** It rained a long time. **Second:** Robin's clothes were wet.

Answer:

10. **First:** Raw meat was on the table for a week. **Second:** The house stunk.

Answer:

G, Fill in the spaces with the correct form of the verb in parentheses in past perfect continuous tense.

Note: This tense describes actions which were ongoing before other past actions, or which were ongoing in the distant past. It uses the helping verb phrase "had been" followed by the verb + "ing".

Example: I / You / We / They / He / She / It had been watching the fish in the aquarium before the giant turtle appeared.





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- Before I bought my new boat, I (go) _____ to the boat show every day to see the newest models.
- You (talk) _____ to Whitney before the show began.
- We (think) _____ about buying an electric car even before the price of gas went up.
- They (race) _____ cars at that track for twenty years before it closed.
- He (drive) _____ too fast all afternoon before the accident happened.
- After she died, it was discovered that she (make) _____ secret donations to the shelter for years.
- We (grow) _____ grapes for twelve years before we decided to open a winery.

H, Fill in the spaces with the correct form of the verb in parentheses in past perfect continuous tense.

Note: Some of the sentences in this exercise provide practice using the negative in past perfect progressive tense.

Example: The forest (burn) had been burning for a week before the fire was put out.

Example: The firefighters (not, sleep) had not been sleeping at all until more help arrived.

- Tony's knee (ache) _____ until the coach bandaged it.
- Sean and Melinda (not, keep) _____ good financial records before they got an accountant to help them.
- The owner of the cookie shop (plan) _____ to add two more ovens before the building burned.
- My family and I (live) _____ in the Florida Keys before we decided to move to the northern part of the state.
- The peaches (not, hang) _____ on the trees for long before the birds ate them.
- The lake (supply) _____ water for the town since 1902. Now it was too polluted.
- Crystal (paint) _____ the walls before she ran out of paint.
- The colony's independent farmers (feel) _____ resentful about English rule and taxation long before the Revolution.
- Mrs. Esposito (not, cook) _____ very much until Vincent arrived and asked for his favorite dishes.
- Until Nigel joined a fraternity, he (call) _____ his father every Saturday.





i, Fill in the spaces with the correct form of the verb in parentheses in past perfect progressive tense.

Note: In this exercise, *adverbs, like still, already, usually, frequently, never, and others*—are used in verbs which are in the past perfect progressive tense. An adverb tells us something more about the action of the verb. It is said to "modify" the verb.

Example: Before the horse broke his leg, he (usually, race) had usually been running two races each month.

- 1) The villagers (normally, carry) _____ water for miles before the new well was dug.
- 2) The gymnastics team (still, practice) _____ hard at nine o'clock p.m.
- 3) When Mrs. Stein awoke at six o'clock a.m., her husband (already, milk) _____ the cows for an hour.
- 4) The cat (always, scratch) _____ holes in the furniture before Jody bought him a scratching board.
- 5) Natalie (often, find) _____ small shells on the beach, which she was using to make jewelry.
- 6) The children (seldom, read) _____ books before the nanny began taking them to the library.
- 7) Trina (never, ski) _____ before her family moved to the mountains.
- 8) John and Carrie (happily, prepare) _____ a room for a baby boy before they discovered that they would have a girl.
- 9) Our mail carrier (faithfully, bring) _____ our mail for over 30 years before he retired.
- 10) The dog next door (persistently bark) _____ each night that summer, keeping us awake.

