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The **Past Perfect Continuous** is used to talk about an ongoing action that was taking place until another **specified moment in the past**.



via <https://englishfull.ru/grammatika/past-perfect-continuous.html>

## Negative sentences

To make negative statements in the Past Perfect Continuous, we use:

**had not (hadn't) been + the “-ing” form of the verb**

Singular

Plural

*I had not been (hadn't been) sleeping*

*We hadn't been sleeping*

*You hadn't been sleeping*

*You hadn't been sleeping*

*He/she/it hadn't been sleeping*

*They hadn't been sleeping*

- *Mary decided to buy a new juicer because her old one **hadn't been working** for years.*
- *He **hadn't been studying** for 5 months before he returned to the university from a sabbatical leave.*
- *I **hadn't been training** every day, so my results were very poor.*

## Questions in Past Perfect Continuous

We use **Past Perfect Continuous** to ask and answer questions about actions or events that started in the past and continued up to a certain time or another action in the past.



via <https://www.englishpage.com/verbpage/pastperfectcontinuous.html>

To make questions in the **Past Perfect Continuous**, we should use the following structure:

**had + [subject] + been + -ing verb**

## Yes/No questions

To create a question that will be answered with a 'yes' or 'no', use '**Had**' (or '**Hadn't**' for a negative question) + been + the ing ([Present Participle](#)) form of the verb.

Singular

Plural

**Had I been skating?**

**Had we been skating?**

**Had you been skating?**

**Had you been skating?**

**Had he/she/it been skating?**

**Had they been skating?**

- **Had it been snowing** for a long time before you went for a walk?
- **Had you been playing** chess with Timothy when your mom called you for dinner?
- **Had she been studying** Spanish for three years by the time she went to Madrid?

Note: In *short positive answers* to the Past Perfect Continuous questions we use only full forms of 'had'. In *short negative answers* we can also use short forms of 'had'.

- *Had you been playing football?*
- *Yes, I **had** (No, I **hadn't**).*
- *Had she been watching TV at that moment?*
- *Yes, she **had** (No, she **hadn't**).*

## Special questions

Special questions (also known as wh-questions) are questions that require more information in their answers. They are made using [wh- words](#) such as **what, where, when, why, which, who, how, how many, how much**.

To make a special question, use the same word order as with yes-no questions but put a wh-word before the verb 'had'. The structure is:

**wh-word + had + [subject] + been + -ing verb**

- *How long **had** she **been waiting**?*
- ***What** had you **been doing** when you cut your finger?*

Note that [state verbs](#) cannot be used in any continuous tenses. Instead of using Past Perfect Continuous with these verbs, we should use [Past Perfect](#).

- The car ~~**had been belonging**~~ to Mike for years before Tina bought it.
- The car **had belonged** to Mike for years before Tina bought it.

See also:

[Past Perfect Continuous: Statements](#)

[Present Perfect Continuous or Past Perfect Continuous?](#)