

Table Of Contents:

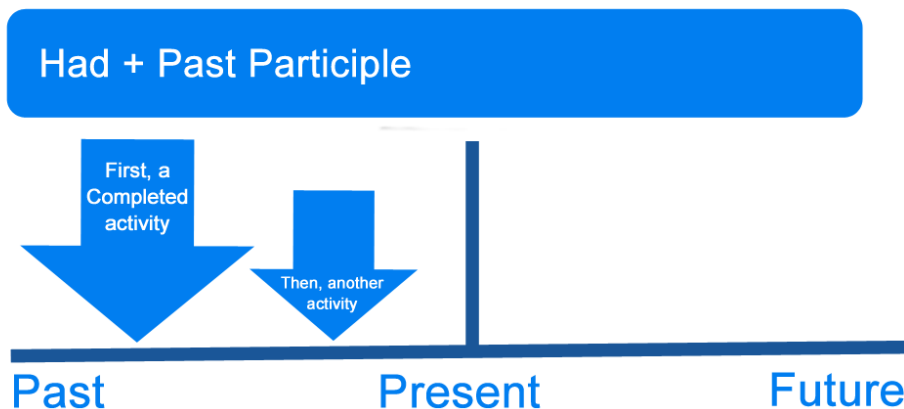
- [How to form Past Perfect](#)
- [When to use Past Perfect](#)
- [A finished action before a second point in the past](#)
- [An action of duration before some point in the past](#)
- [Unreal or imaginary things in the past](#)

The **Past Perfect** is a verb tense used to express actions that occurred in the past and finished before another action in the past.

We use the **Past Perfect** for something that started in the past and continued **up to a given time in the past**. The Past Perfect is used in the same way as the [Present Perfect](#), but it refers to a *time in the past*, not the present.

Here's a depiction of what Past Perfect means:

Past Perfect Tense



via <https://writingexplained.org/grammar-dictionary/past-perfect-tense>

- *She didn't want to move. She **had lived** in Milan all her life.*
- *After we **had purchased** tickets, we were able to enter the venue.*

The Past Perfect is normally used with the [Past Simple](#) to talk about two or more events that happened at different times in the past. In such statements the Past Simple describes the event that is closest to the time of speaking. The Past Perfect describes an event further back

in the past. To denote this sequence of actions, the prepositions 'after' and 'before' are often used.

- The train **had left** (Past Perfect) before we **arrived** (Past Simple) at the station. (The train left earlier and we arrived later).
- Anthony **had gone** (Past Perfect) to the university when I **knocked** (Past Simple) on his door.
- He **had cooked** (Past Perfect) dinner before Gwen **got** (Past Simple) back from work.

How to form Past Perfect

To make the Past Perfect, use:

had + the Past Participle form of the verb

Note: For regular verbs, this is the “-ed” form of the verb. For the list of Past Participle forms of irregular verbs see our article on [irregular verbs](#).

Singular	Plural
<i>I had planned</i> <i>You had planned</i> <i>He/she/it had planned</i>	<i>We had planned</i> <i>You had planned</i> <i>They had planned</i>

In the following examples, even if the Past Simple action is first in the sentence, it still happened later:

- The traffic **was** bad because a car **had broken** on the road.
- When we **arrived** at the stadium, the game **had already** started.

When to use Past Perfect

The Past Perfect is used to convey the following meanings.

A finished action before a second point in the past

- After we **had repaired** the car, we went to the seas.
- When we arrived, the movie **had** already **started**.

An action of duration before some point in the past

- When Sarah graduated, she **had been** in Berlin for six years.
- On the 20th of May, I **'d worked** here for six months.

Unreal or imaginary things in the past

- If I **had known** you were ill, I would have visited you.
- She would have passed the exam if she **had studied** harder.
- I wish I **hadn't gone** to bed so late!

In this video from AMES 836, you'll find a good explanation of what the Past Perfect means and how it is used:

More on Past Perfect:

[Past Perfect: Negative & Questions](#)

[Present Perfect of Past Perfect?](#)