

Past Perfect Progressive

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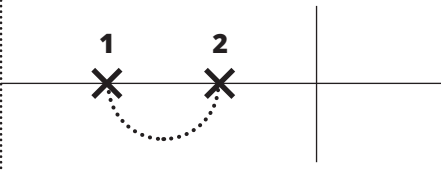
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Quick and Handy Grammar Review

A. The Past Perfect Progressive

The past perfect progressive (also called the *past perfect continuous*) is a verb tense that is useful for discussing two past actions, where the first action continues to the second action. It is not that commonly used in English, but it is needed occasionally. Let's take a closer look at this verb tense.

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

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.*

Quick and Handy Grammar Review 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.*
- *We were waiting for two hours when he arrived.*

NOTE #4:

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

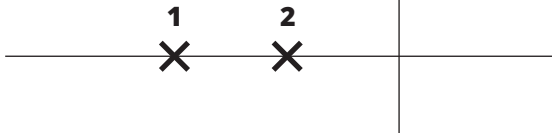
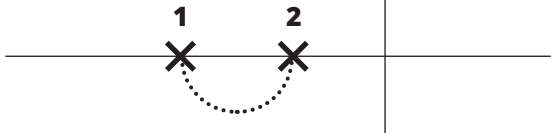
1. **Past Perfect** = Had + Past Participle (e.g., *had studied*)
2. **Progressive** = Be + -ing Verb (e.g., *be studying*)
3. **The Past Participle of Be** (the first part of the progressive form) = Been
4. **Final Result** = Had + Been + -ing Verb

Past Perfect	Had +	Past Participle	
Progressive	↓	Be +	-ing Verb
Past Perfect Progressive	Had +	Been +	-ing Verb
Example	<i>I had been studying.</i>		

Quick and Handy Grammar Review cont.

B. The Past Perfect Vs. The Past Perfect Progressive

We need to be able to distinguish 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 is 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 finished before the second past action.	The first past action continued until the second past action.
Time Markers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> by the time when before after (Note: The typical past markers <i>last</i> , <i>yesterday</i> , and <i>ago</i> are often additionally used.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> by the time when before (Note: The typical progressive markers <i>for</i> and <i>since</i> are often additionally used.)
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I had finished dinner by the time he had called me last night.</i> <i>My friend had texted me five times before I answered.</i> <i>By the time she got home, someone had fixed the door.</i> <i>Had you already made plans when I asked you out yesterday?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>My sister had been studying English for 11 years before she entered university.</i> <i>We had been waiting for two hours by the time she arrived.</i> <i>When he called me at midnight, I had been sleeping since 8 pm.</i> <i>Had you been traveling all night by the time you got to your hotel?</i>

Exercise 1

Form the past perfect progressive of the verbs in brackets.

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

Exercise 2

CORRECT THE ERRORS

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

1. 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.

2. My parents had traveling for six months when their motorhome broke down.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Exercise 3

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

1. 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.

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

3. Last Friday / Lisa / lie / in bed with the flu / six days

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

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

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

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

8. The technician / arrive / I / work / without a computer / four days

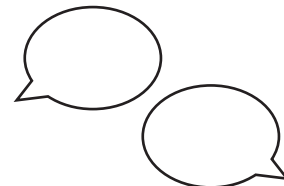
Exercise 4

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

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

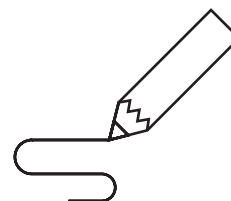
PAIR WORK – ROLE-PLAY

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.



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

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



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

[illegible]

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 a week 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