

# Past perfect (I had done)

A

Study this example situation:

at 10.30



PAUL

at 11.00



SARAH

Sarah went to a party last week. Paul went to the party too, but they didn't see each other. Paul left the party at 10.30 and Sarah arrived at 11 o'clock. So: When Sarah arrived at the party, Paul wasn't there. He **had gone** home.

Had gone is the *past perfect (simple)*:

I/we/they/you he/she/it	had	(= I'd etc.) (= he'd etc.)	gone seen finished etc.
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The past perfect simple is **had + past participle (gone/seen/finished etc.)**.

Sometimes we talk about something that happened in the past:

- Sarah **arrived** at the party.

This is the starting point of the story. Then, if we want to talk about things that happened *before* this time, we use the past perfect (**had ...**):

- When Sarah arrived at the party, Paul **had** already **gone** home.

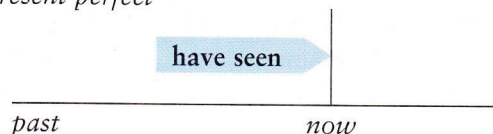
Some more examples:

- When we got home last night, we found that somebody **had broken** into the flat.
- Karen didn't want to go to the cinema with us because she'd already **seen** the film.
- At first I thought I'd **done** the right thing, but I soon realised that I'd **made** a big mistake.
- The man sitting next to me on the plane was very nervous. He **hadn't flown** before.  
or ... He **had** never **flown** before.

B

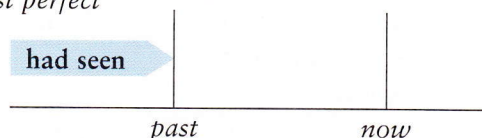
Compare the *present perfect (have seen etc.)* and the *past perfect (had seen etc.)*:

*Present perfect*



- Who is that woman? I've never **seen** her before.
- We aren't hungry. We've just **had** lunch.
- The house is dirty. They **haven't cleaned** it for weeks.

*Past perfect*



- I didn't know who she was. I'd never **seen** her before. (= before that time)
- We weren't hungry. We'd just **had** lunch.
- The house was dirty. They **hadn't cleaned** it for weeks.

C

Compare the *past simple (left, was etc.)* and the *past perfect (had left, had been etc.)*:

- A: Was Tom there when you arrived?  
B: Yes, but he **left** soon afterwards.
- Kate **wasn't** at home when I phoned.  
She **was** at her mother's house.

- A: Was Tom there when you arrived?  
B: No, he **had** already **left**.
- Kate **had** just **got** home when I phoned.  
She **had been** at her mother's house.



## Exercises

## Unit 15

### 15.1 Read the situations and write sentences from the words in brackets.

- 1 You went to Sue's house, but she wasn't there.  
(she / go / out) She had gone out.
- 2 You went back to your home town after many years. It wasn't the same as before.  
(it / change / a lot) .....
- 3 I invited Rachel to the party, but she couldn't come.  
(she / arrange / to do something else) .....
- 4 You went to the cinema last night. You got to the cinema late.  
(the film / already / begin) .....
- 5 It was nice to see Dan again after such a long time.  
(I / not / see / him for five years) .....
- 6 I offered Sue something to eat, but she wasn't hungry.  
(she / just / have / breakfast) .....

### 15.2 For each situation, write a sentence ending with **never ... before**. Use the verb in brackets.

- 1 The man sitting next to you on the plane was very nervous. It was his first flight.  
(fly) He'd never flown before.
- 2 A woman walked into the room. She was a complete stranger to me.  
(see) I ..... before.
- 3 Sam played tennis yesterday. He wasn't very good at it because it was his first game.  
(play) He .....
- 4 Last year we went to Denmark. It was our first time there.  
(be there) We .....

### 15.3 Use the sentences on the left to complete the paragraphs on the right. These sentences are in the order in which they happened – so (1) happened before (2), (2) before (3) etc. But your paragraph begins with the underlined sentence, so sometimes you need the past perfect.

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|--|---|
| 1 (1) Somebody broke into the office during the night.<br>(2) <u>We arrived at work in the morning.</u><br>(3) We called the police.                         | } We arrived at work in the morning and found that somebody <u>had broken</u> into the office during the night. So we ..... |
| 2 (1) Laura went out this morning.<br>(2) <u>I tried to phone her.</u><br>(3) There was no answer.   |   |
| 3 (1) Jim came back from holiday a few days ago.<br>(2) <u>I met him the same day.</u><br>(3) He looked very well.   | } I tried to phone Laura this morning, but ..... no answer.<br>She ..... out.   |
| 4 (1) Kevin sent Sally lots of emails.<br>(2) She never replied to them.<br>(3) <u>Yesterday he got a phone call from her.</u><br>(4) He was very surprised. |   |
|  | } I met Jim a few days ago. ....<br>just ..... holiday.<br>..... very well.   |
|  |   |
|  | } Yesterday Kevin .....<br>from Sally. He ..... very surprised.<br>He ..... lots of emails,<br>but she .....                |
|  |   |

### 15.4 Put the verb into the correct form, past perfect (I had done) or past simple (I did).

- 1 'Was Paul at the party when you arrived?' 'No, he had gone (go) home.'
- 2 I felt very tired when I got home, so I ..... (go) straight to bed.
- 3 The house was very quiet when I got home. Everybody ..... (go) to bed.
- 4 Sorry I'm late. The car ..... (break) down on my way here.
- 5 We were driving along the road when we ..... (see) a car which  
..... (break) down, so we ..... (stop) to help.