

PAST PERFECT (SIMPLE AND CONTINUOUS) PART ONE

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The students in Professor Baker's afternoon class had been waiting for almost ten minutes this afternoon when the professor finally showed up. He said that he was very sorry. He told them he had lost his watch. He asked one of the students the time and the student replied that it was ten after two. After that, Professor Baker explained oxidation to his students, and he asked them some questions which he had prepared for them. When he had finished, he announced an exam for next week. Then he dismissed the class.

Bill had been working on the same problem for two hours when Jack called him up and asked if he had solved it. Bill said that he hadn't but that he was still trying to. Jack said that he had spent from four o'clock until six o'clock trying to solve it, but that he hadn't been able to. He told Bill that he had given up at six o'clock and gone to dinner.

George had been living in College Town for almost six months when his cousin Nick arrived from Greece. He had been boarding with an American family since his arrival, and he had learned a great deal about American habits and customs. He had gained considerable facility in English, and he had gotten used to eating American food. He hadn't had many letters from home, however, and he was anxious for news of his family. Nick told him that his father had been quite ill for several weeks during the summer. "But he got over his illness before I left," Nick added.

FORMATION

Simple past perfect tense is a verb phrase made from a past form of auxiliary *have* and a past participle (*had+pp*).

Uses of Simple Past Perfect

Simple past perfect is chiefly used in three situations:

A. To express the time relationship between two events in the past, particularly when the clause marker does not indicate this relationship.

Main Clause			Time Clause			
Subject	V-Phrase	C	Marker	S	V	C
Prof. Baker	had already dismiss	the class	when	he	announced	the exam
Jack	had given up	trying to to solve the problem	when	he	called up	Bill
George	had learned	English quite well	by the time	His cousin	arrived	

Uses of Simple Past Perfect

b. To report statements made in the simple past tense or the present perfect.

Direct Speech

Professor Baker said, "I have lost my watch."

Jack said, "I gave up at six o'clock."

Nick told George, "Your father got over his illness."

Reported Speech

Professor Baker said that he had lost his watch.

Jack said that he had given up at six o'clock.

Nick told George that his father had gotten over his illness

Uses of Simple Past Perfect

c. To express wishes and unreal conditions about the past. These uses are discussed in Lesson XIX.

Professor Baker wishes that he *had not lost* his watch.

If he *had not lost* it, he would not have been late..

PAST PERFECT VS SIMPLE PAST

PAST PERFECT

Jack had spent two hours on the problem when he gave up.

(The sequence of events is reflected in the verb tenses. The first event is expressed in the past perfect.)

George had lived here for six months when his cousin Nick arrived from Greece.

(The sequence of events is reflected in the verb tenses. The first event is expressed in the past perfect.)

Professor Baker had already dismissed the class when he announced the exam.

(The past perfect tense shows that the dismissing occurred first. The *already* indicates that the order is unusual or unexpected.)

SIMPLE PAST

Jack spent two hours on the problem before he gave up.

(The sequence of events is expressed by the use of the time-word *before*.)

George lived here six months. Then his cousin Nick arrived from Greece.

(The sequence is expressed by the use of *then* [VI,5b].)

Professor Baker announced an exam after he dismissed the class.

(The time relationship of the two events is shown by the time-word *after*.)

PAST PERFECT VS SIMPLE PAST

As you can see from the above examples, the same facts can be expressed in either tense. The past perfect is used more in formal written language than in speaking.

CONTINUOUS PAST PERFECT FORMATION

Continuous past perfect is a verb phrase made from *had* plus *been* plus *ing-form*.

Use

This tense is concerned with expressing the duration of an event or activity of the past

TIME EXPRESSIONS

Two time expressions or their equivalents are required in the environment of a past perfect tense - either in the same sentence or in one just before or after it:

- a. T1 must express the duration of the activity. Expressions of this type begin with *for* or *since* (XI, 7).
- b. T2 states the time or the event which interrupted or concluded the activity.

SENTENCE PATTERN

S	V	P	T1	T2
The students	had been waiting		for almost ten minutes	when Prof. Baker showed up.
Bill	had been working		for two hours	when Jock called.
George	had been living	in College Town	for almost six months	when Nick came from Greece.

PAST PERFECT VS CONTINUOUS PAST PERFECT

PAST PERFECT	CONTINUOUS PAST PERFECT
<p>George had lived with an American family for six months when Nick arrived (This sentence may suggest to some speakers that he changed his living arrangements after Nick arrived, but it does not specifically say so.)</p>	<p>George had been living with an American family for six months when Nick arrived. (This sentence may suggest to some speakers that he will continue the same living arrangements, but it does not actually say so.)</p>
<p>Professor Baker had already dismissed the class when he announced the exam (The past perfect verb phrase expresses a one-time completed act. It cannot be expressed in a continuous tense.)</p>	<p>It cannot be expressed in a continuous tense</p>

Most statements in the continuous can also be stated in the simple past perfect with little or no difference in meaning. Past perfect statements which refer to completed punctual acts cannot be expressed in the continuous, however. Verbs of mental state, condition, and perception (III, 8) are not used in continuous tenses.

THE END OF PART 1