



past perfect continuous

We use the **past perfect continuous** to talk about unfinished activities that started before a specific time in the past:

When I met him, I'd **been working** in London since 2004.

I didn't know many people. I **hadn't been living** there for very long.

We use the **past perfect continuous** to

focus on an activity. It is not important if the activity is finished or unfinished:

She was ready. She'd **been studying** very hard.

(We are interested in the activity of studying.)

His clothes smelt. **Had he been smoking?**

We often use the **past perfect continuous** to say *how long*:

I'd **been writing** for two hours.

How long **had you been standing** there?

I **hadn't been watching** television for very long. *We are referring to a time in the past, e.g. yesterday.*

Dialogue

A: I got engaged to my boyfriend last month. We'd **been living** together for about a year.

B: Really? How many people **had you told**?

2 Practice 1 - Past perfect simple

Last summer, Alice went on holiday. She did a lot of things for the first time. Write a sentence about each activity like in the example.



1. eat sushi She'd never eaten sushi before.
2. fly by plane
3. swim in the sea
4. sunbathe on the beach
5. stay at a 5-star hotel
6. meet so many interesting people
7. have so much fun
8. sing in a karaoke bar
9. see ancient buildings



3 Practice 2 - Past perfect continuous

Play the video file or scan the code on the right with your mobile device. Imagine the actions took place yesterday. Write a sentence about each clip using the past perfect continuous.

bake cookies

cycle in the forest

rain all morning

argue with someone

swim in the sea

walk in the park

work out in the gym

1. She 'd been arguing with someone .
2. She
3. It
4. They
5. They
6. He
7. They



4

Practice 3 - Simple vs. continuous

Cross out the incorrect structure to complete the following sentences:

1. I loved Paris. I'd visited/I'd been visiting the city three times before then.
2. When I met Carlos, he was a student. He'd been studying/He'd studied in London for nearly two years.
3. Alison was very excited. That was the first time she'd ever travelled/she'd ever been travelling abroad.
4. Joseph seemed very stressed. I think he'd been working/he'd worked too much.
5. I'd emailed/I'd been emailing Jack five times. Until then, he hadn't replied/he hadn't been replying.
6. Until 2002, Brazil had won/had been winning the world cup four times.
7. I saw Pedro yesterday in the park. I hadn't seen/hadn't been seeing him for ages! I wondered what he had done/had been doing with himself all that time.



Key

2. Practice 1 - Past perfect simple

Note: the past participle of 'go' is 'been' or 'gone'. If the meaning is 'visit', we use 'been', e.g. 'I'd been to Tokyo five times before then.' If the meaning is 'leave', we use 'gone', e.g. 'Mark wasn't there. He'd gone home.'

2. She'd never flown by plane before.
3. She'd never swum in the sea before.
4. She'd never sunbathed on the beach before.
5. She'd never stayed at a 5-star hotel before.
6. She'd never met so many interesting people before.
7. She'd never had so much fun before.
8. She'd never sung in a karaoke bar before.
9. She'd never seen ancient buildings before.

3. Practice 2 - Past perfect continuous

2. She'd been baking cookies.
3. It had been raining all morning.
4. They'd been walking in the park.
5. They'd been cycling in the forest.
6. He'd been working out in the gym.
7. They'd been swimming in the sea.

4. Practice 3 - Simple vs. continuous

1. I'd visited
2. He'd been studying
3. she'd ever travelled
4. he'd been working
5. I'd emailed; he hadn't replied
6. had won
7. hadn't seen; had been doing