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Past perfect tense and Past perfect continuous

I-Past perfect

1-Form

The past perfect tense is formed with had + past participle:

- The ship had gone down. (affirmative)
- The winter had been very mild. (affirmative)
- Had the ship gone down quickly? (Yes/ No question)
- When had the ship gone down? (Wh- question)
- They hadn't (had not) done their homework.

The past perfect is used to refer to an event that is previous to another in past time. We use it when we want to draw attention to the fact that something took place and finished before something else in the past and to show that something happened before a specific date, time, or event. Examples:

- We had heard nothing from Tony before he returned.
- She didn't mention that she had seen you at the match.

We often use the past perfect simple in clauses connected by a conjunction (e.g. when, and, that, because, so) to a clause containing a verb in the simple past.

- I knew (that) I had seen her somewhere.
- It had stopped raining so they didn't bother to put the car away.

We use the past perfect to clarify the order of event:

- They had finished eating when I got there.

Exercise 1

Fill in the blanks with the past perfect of the verb in parentheses:

- 1- The Titanic had luxuries that ships _____ (never/have) before.
- 2- Poor emigrants on the ship _____ (leave) behind a way of life.
- 3- By 1912, the Wright brothers _____ (already/ make) a successful flight.
- 4- The Titanic _____ (originally/ have) 32 lifeboats.
- 5- The captain of the Titanic didn't pay attention to the warnings he _____ (receive).

- 6- The winter before April, 1912, _____ (be) unusually mild.
- 7- Pieces of ice _____ (break) away from the Arctic region.
- 8- Passengers heard a noise but didn't understand what _____ (happen).
- 9- For many years, people searched for the Titanic. By 1985, the wreck of the Titanic _____ (passive: find).
- 10- By 1912, the radio _____ (passive: already/ invent).
- 11- Everyone was surprised when you failed the test because you _____ (always/ have) good grades before.
- 12- The story of the Titanic was not new to me because I _____ (see) the movies.

Exercise 2

Tell if the following had already happened or hadn't happened yet by the time you got to class:

The teacher/ collect the homework.

By the time I got to class, the teacher had already collected the homework.

- 1- The teacher/ arrive
- 2- Most of the students/ arrive
- 3- The class/ begin
- 4- The teacher/ take attendance
- 5- I/ do the homework.

II-Past perfect continuous

1-Form

The past perfect continuous is formed with had + been + verb- ing

- The ship had been travelling for four days. (affirmative)
- The passengers had been enjoying themselves. (affirmative)
- What had the passengers been doing? (question)
- They hadn't been working for long. (negative)

We use the past perfect continuous ^{to show} ~~is used~~ that a continuous past action occurred before another past action.

- His eyes were red. I could tell he'd been crying.

It is also used to show the duration of a continuous action that was completed before another past action. We use it to show the amount of time.

- He'd been driving without a break for several hours when the accident happened.

Exercise 3

Fill in the blanks with the simple past tense or the past perfect continuous tense of the verb in parentheses:

- 1- When I _____ (come) to the U.S, I _____ (study) English for three years.
- 2- I _____ (wait) for two years when I _____ (get) a chance to leave my country.
- 3- I _____ (live) in the same house all my life when I _____ (leave) my city.
- 4- I _____ (feel) very sad when I left my job because I _____ (work) with the same people for ten years.
- 5- I _____ (study) to be a nurse for six months when a war _____ (break out) in my country.
- 6- By the time I _____ (get) to the U.S., I _____ (travel) for four days.

The Titanic

The year was 1912. The radio **had** already **been** invented in 1901. The Wright Brothers **had** already **made** their first successful flight in 1903. The Titanic—the ship of dreams—**had** just **been** built and was ready to make its first voyage from England to America with its 2,200 passengers.

The Titanic was the most magnificent ship that **had** ever **been** built. It had luxuries that ships **had** never **had** before: electric light and heat, electric elevators, a swimming pool, a Turkish bath, libraries, and much more. It was built to give its first-class passengers all the comforts of the best hotels.

But rich passengers were not the only ones traveling on the Titanic. The passengers in third class were emigrants who **had** left behind a complete way of life and were coming to America with hopes of a better life.

The Titanic began to cross the Atlantic Ocean on April 10. The winter of 1912 **had** been unusually mild, and large blocks of ice **had** broken away from the Arctic region. By the fifth day at sea, the captain **had** received several warnings about ice, but he was not very worried; he didn't realize how much danger the ship was in. On April 14, at 11:40 p.m., an iceberg was spotted¹ straight ahead. The captain tried to reverse the direction of his ship, but he couldn't because the Titanic was traveling too fast and it was too big. It hit the iceberg and started to sink.

The Titanic **had** originally **had** 32 lifeboats, but 12 of them **had** been removed to make the ship look better. While the ship was sinking, rich people were put on lifeboats. Women and children were put on the lifeboats before men. By the time the third-class passengers were allowed to come up from their cabins, most of the lifeboats **had** already left.

Several hours later, another ship arrived to help, but the Titanic **had** already gone down. Only one third of the passengers survived.