

Occasionally the Past Continuous is found in the principal clause whereas the Past Indefinite is still used in the clause of time. It usually happens when the verb in the principal clause is terminative and the Past Indefinite would indicate a completed action.

e.g. **As I poured** her out a glass of sherry, she **was saying**: "I always imagined you were older."

b) The actions of the principal and the subordinate clauses are partially simultaneous. In this case the action of the subordinate clause serves as a background for the action of the principal clause which is usually a shorter accomplished action. In this case we normally find the Past Continuous in the subordinate clause and the Past Indefinite in the principal clause.

e.g. **As I was going** inside, Mrs Drawbell **intercepted** me.

One evening, just as I **was leaving** the office, Martin **rang me up**.

c) The actions of the two clauses form a succession. In this case, naturally, only the Past Indefinite is found.

e.g. As the sun **disappeared**, a fresh breeze **stirred** the new curtains at the window.

As **I turned** back into the room a gust of wind **crashed** the door shut behind me.

2) **A complex sentence with a clause of time introduced by the conjunction while.** Here we find two different kinds of time relations between the actions of the two clauses.

a) The actions are fully simultaneous. In this case either the Past Continuous or the Past Indefinite is used in the subordinate clause and the Past Indefinite is normally found in the principal clause:

e.g. Martha said nothing but **looked** from one face to the other *while* they discussed plans. She sat still as a statue *while* he **was playing** the sonata.

b) The actions are partially simultaneous. In this case the action of the subordinate clause serves as a background for the action of the principal clause which is a shorter accomplished action. So

the Past Indefinite is used in the principal clause while in the subordinate clause either the Past Indefinite or the Past Continuous is found.

e.g. *While I was reading*, I **heard** a splash from the bath, and I realized that Martin must be there.

*While* he **stood** there wondering what sort of pictures to hang on the walls he **heard** the telephone ring.

\*

### The Past Perfect

§ 29. The Past Perfect is an analytical form which is built up by means of the auxiliary verb **to have** in the Past Indefinite and the participle of the notional verb (e.g. *I had worked. He had worked*, etc.). (On the formation of the participle see "Verbs", § 5 and Appendix.) The same auxiliary is used to form the interrogative and the negative forms (e.g. *Had you worked? Had he worked? It had not worked. They had not worked*). In spoken English the contracted forms *I'd, he'd, she'd, we'd, you'd, they'd* are used in affirmative sentences and *hadn't* in negative sentences.

§ 30. The Past Perfect falls within the time sphere of the past and is mainly found in narration. However, as will be seen, it may be used in some of its meanings in present-time contexts as well. The Past Perfect has three distinct uses which will be further referred to as **Past Perfect I, Past Perfect II and Past Perfect III**.

1) **Past Perfect I** serves to express an action accomplished before a given past moment and viewed back from that past moment. It may be a single point action, an action of some duration or a recurrent action.

We often find this use of the Past Perfect in narration when a string of consecutive actions is broken up because it becomes necessary to refer back to a previously accomplished action. It is the function of the Past Perfect to mark this step back in narration.

e.g. She was no fool. She **had read** much, in several languages, and she could talk of the books she **had read** with good sense.

It was long afterwards that I found out what **had happened**. He knew where Haviiand lived, but he had never **been** there.

She mentioned not infrequently the fact that her grandfather **had been** an ambassador, but never that he **had been** a stable-boy.

She was in a dressing-gown and her hair was dishevelled. She had evidently just got out of bed.

As is seen from the above example, Past Perfect I is structurally independent and may be used in simple sentences as well as in various kinds of clauses.

*Note.* The time of the action expressed by the Past Perfect need not be indicated as the form itself shows that the action is accomplished before a given past moment. Yet there may be indications of time if necessary.

e.g. Jolyon remembered that he also **had talked** a good deal about it in his first year at Cambridge, and **given it up** in his second. They were concerned with why the machine **had not run** the day before.

Sometimes the step back which is made in narration refers to one single action which is then expressed by the Past Perfect (see the examples above). Often, however, the step back in narration involves a whole situation comprising a number of actions. These actions may form a new succession of actions. In this case the Past Perfect may be used for all the actions (a) or for the first action alone. The other actions are then expressed by the Past Indefinite (b). There seem to be no hard and fast rules here.

e.g. a) Adeline was selecting a book from the shelves. When she had first **come** to the place there **had been** few books there. To these she **had added** many volumes of poetry, old and new, novels, works of philosophy, history, essays. It **had been** necessary to build new shelves to accommodate the books she **had collected**. He told her that he had recently **recovered** from an attack of typhoid and **had come** to Switzerland to get back his strength.

b) It was at Blackstable that I first met Edward. I was fifteen and had just **come** back from school for the summer holidays. The morning after I got home I **took** a towel and bathing drawers and **went** down into the beach. Passing the bank, I **called** in to say how-do-you-do to the man-

»

ager, and when I came out I met my uncle. He **stopped and shook** hands with me. He was walking with a stranger. He **introduced** me to him.

2) Past Perfect II serves to express an action which began before a given past moment and continues into it or up to it. This grammatical meaning is mainly expressed by the Past Perfect Continuous (see "Verbs", §34). However, the Past Perfect Non-Continuous is found in the following cases:

a) With stative verbs where its use is compulsory.

e.g. She began to do all the things that she **had wanted** to do *for years*. He suddenly understood that she **had loved** him *all her life*.

b) With some dynamic verbs of durative meaning where the Past Perfect (Non-Continuous) may be used instead of the Past Perfect Continuous with little difference in meaning.

e.g. Roy mentioned that he **had dined** at home since his return. June had never before been in the upper boxes. From the age of fifteen she had habitually **accompanied** her grandfather to the stalls.

As to terminative verbs, they normally have the meaning of Past Perfect I and never of Past Perfect II.

Since it is often difficult to draw the line between durative and terminative verbs, it is recommended that students of English should use the Past Perfect Continuous with all dynamic verbs to express an action begun before a given past moment and continued up to it or into it.

c) In negative sentences, when the action itself is completely negated, Past Perfect II is preferred to the Past Perfect Continuous.

e.g. Young Jolyon and Soames **had not met** *since the day of Bosinney's death*. He mentioned that he **had not played** cards *for three years*.

Past Perfect II is associated with certain time indications: either a whole period of the duration of the action is indicated or its starting point (for details see "Verbs", § 16, 2).

e.g. I suppose every family has a black sheep. Tom had been a sore trial to his *for twenty years*. He was not aware *how long* he had sat there. At ten o'clock he awoke and remembered that he hadn't seen

Lily *since Saturday*. He told me he had been badly ill *since he returned from abroad*.

**Note.** Note that in clauses of time introduced by *since* the Past Indefinite is commonly used (see the example above).

3) In adverbial clauses of time introduced by the conjunctions *when, before, after, as soon as* and *till/until* to express a future action viewed from the past. It shows that the action of the subordinate clause will be completed before the action of the principal clause which is usually expressed by the Future-in-the-Past.

This use of the Past Perfect is structurally dependent as it is restricted only to the above-mentioned type of clauses. Besides, it is found only in reported speech.

e.g. It was desperately early; he took up his book again, making up his mind that he would not look at his watch *till* he had read thirty pages.

You would have to talk to him *before* he had made up his mind.

4) To express unreal actions. (For this see "Verbs", §§122-126, 132-133, 144, 146-149, 153, 162.)

§ 31. As has been said above, the Past Perfect is usually found in past-time contexts (see the examples above). However, it may also be used in present-time contexts in its various meanings. Yet even in this case its use is related not to the moment of speaking but to a definite past moment expressed or understood from the context or situation.

e.g. "We only learned about it before dinner," said Muriel. "We had not expected anything so fantastic." Roy hesitated. "I don't know whether Mother has told you, Grace," he said, "but a friend of mine is arriving today." "Yes, I had heard," said Grace.

"Did you know the average housewife walks ten miles a day about the house? I heard so on the radio today." "I hadn't thought about it," he said.

§ 32. Note the following sentence patterns in which the Past Perfect is or may be used:

1) In a simple sentence or in two co-ordinate sentences the Past Perfect is often used in combination with the Past Continuous when both actions are viewed from the same past moment. The definite moment need not be indicated in this case as the pattern itself shows that the actions are related to the same past moment. One action is accomplished before that implied moment while the other one is still in progress. This pattern is very widely used.

e.g. Ann had risen and was peering over his shoulder.

She had got up, and was breathing deeply, with her lips parted and her cheeks very flushed.

All along the walls people were standing and at the far end of the square boys had climbed into the trees.

As he went down the stairs I walked across to my window and pulled the curtains. The sky had cleared and the moon was shining on the snow.

With stative verbs and with some dynamic verbs of durative meaning the Past Indefinite is used instead of the Past Continuous in this pattern.

e.g. The rain had passed and the air was fresh and sweet.

She had changed her wet clothes and wore a light cotton dress.

2) In a complex sentence with a subordinate clause of time introduced by the conjunction *when*. The time relations between the action of the *when*-clause and that of the principal clause may be of various kinds: the action of the principal clause may follow the action of the *when*-clause, be fully or partially simultaneous with it and even occasionally precede it. Accordingly, different finite forms are used in the principal and the subordinate clauses:

a) The most commonly occurring kind of time relation is when the action of the principal clause closely follows that of the *when*-clause — the two actions form a succession of actions. The Past Indefinite is usually used in both clauses in this case.

e.g. *When* they reached Grosvenor Square, Angela got out of the taxi and **looked** about her, puzzled.

*When* she **returned** with the grammar, she **drew a** chair near his and **sat down** beside him.

Yet sometimes, with the same time relation between the two actions, we find the Past Perfect in the *when-cl&use*. It is used in this case to emphasize the completion of the action in the subordinate clause and the *when-cl&use* then is close in meaning to that of the clause of time introduced by the conjunction *after* (see further below, p. 55).

e.g. *When* they **had shown** him round, fed him on their best, and **thrust** him into their softest chair, they eagerly **demand**ed news.

In a moment the butler came in, to clear up. *When* he had left again, she said: "Your servant is an honest man, isn't he?"

b) When the two actions are partially simultaneous, the Past Continuous is usually found in the principal clause and the Past Indefinite in the *u>Aen*-clause. The former represents the action in its duration. The latter indicates a shorter action which occurs at a certain moment of the development of the action in the principal clause.

e.g. Later that night, I **was reading** in my sitting-room *when* the bell **rang**. *When* he **returned** to the room she **was sitting** by the fire.

With stative verbs and some dynamic verbs of durative meaning, the same time relation is expressed by the Past Indefinite in the principal clause.

e.g. He was still in a state of uncertainty *when* his brother **re-****turned** with a letter in his hand. *When* the car **stopped** in front of the door he **looked** dazed.

c) When the two actions are fully simultaneous, the Past Indefinite is generally used in both clauses.

e.g. Ann Chester looked her best *when* she smiled.  
I often felt sincere admiration *when* I talked to him.

*Note.* The same time relations as described under (a), (b) and (c) may be found in this sentence pattern when the Past Perfect has to be used in the principal clause to mark a step back in narration whereas the Past Indefinite remains unchanged in the *u>Aen*-clause. e.g. My friendship with Roy became the deepest of my life. I **had met** him first

*when* he was a boy of fifteen.

Ashenden remembered the iron grip he **had given** him *when* they **shook** hands and slightly shuddered.

d) Occasionally the action of the principal clause may precede that of the subordinate clause. In this case the Past Perfect is used in the principal clause and the Past Indefinite in the *u>Aen*-clause.

e.g. He walked at my side under the trees by the edge of the park. *When* he next **spoke** his tone **had changed**. *When* he **returned** to the living-room, his wife **hadn't moved**, and the radio continued to play into the silence.

3) In a complex sentence with a *u>Aen*-clause containing the Past Indefinite in the subordinate clause and the negative form of the Past Perfect in the principal clause.

e.g. **I hadn't been** in the pub two minutes *when* somebody **brought** Tom in for a drink.

**I hadn't gone** a hundred yards from the corner *when* I **noticed** there was a car behind me.

*Note* that there is always some indication of measure mentioned in the principal clause. Sentences of this kind are generally rendered in Russian as *не прошло и двух минут, как я пришел в бар, как...*, *не прошел я и ста ярдов, как...*

4) In a complex sentence with a subordinate clause of time introduced by the conjunction *as soon as* when the action of the principal clause closely follows that of the subordinate clause. The two actions form a kind of a succession of actions. Hence, the Past Indefinite is normally used in both parts of the sentence.

e.g. As soon as I had the chance I **asked** Mary-Ann what she knew of the incident.

As soon as she **arrived** in my flat, she **busied** herself tidying it up.

Occasionally the Past Perfect may be found in the subordinate clause where it is used to emphasize the completion of the action



and then the meaning of the subordinate clause is close to that of the subordinate clause of time introduced by the conjunction *after* (see below).

e.g. As *soon as* he had gone, I spoke to Hanna.

5) In a complex sentence with a subordinate clause of time introduced" by the conjunction *after* (the action of the principal clause follows that of the *after-clause*). Generally, the Past Perfect is found in the *after-clause* and the Past Indefinite in the principal clause.

e.g. *After* I had dressed, I went up to Roy's room, and found him in shirt-sleeves and black waistcoat studying his image in the mirror.

*After* he had been through the grammar repeatedly, he took up the dictionary and added twenty words a day to his vocabulary.

The Past Perfect is used in the *after-clause* with terminative as well as durative verbs. With terminative verbs, however, the Past Perfect may be replaced by the Past Indefinite.

e.g. Shortly *after* we returned from Basel, Roy moved to London.

*After* we rose from the table, James immediately went to make a telephone call.

6) In a complex sentence with a subordinate clause of time introduced by the conjunctions *till* or *until* when the action of the principal clause is an action of some duration and precedes that of the subordinate clause. Usually the Past Indefinite is found in both the principal and the subordinate clause.

e.g. He read the manuscripts *until* he was dead tired.

I did not see him again *till* he returned to England for the summer.

Sometimes, however, the Past Perfect is used in the *till/until-clause* to show that the action of the principal clause stopped only after the action of the subordinate clause was accomplished.

e.g. That evening I took out a deck-chair, sat under one of the apple-trees, and read *until* the summer sky had darkened and I could not make out the print. He waited *till* she had regained a certain calm.

7) In a complex sentence with a subordinate clause of time introduced by the conjunction *before*, in which there may be two kinds of time relations between the two actions:

a) The action of the principal clause precedes that of the *before-clause*. Hence, the Past Perfect is found in the principal clause and the Past Indefinite in the subordinate clause.

e.g. Madge had given Dace a set of keys *before* they left the farm on Wednesday morning. • He had heard the news *before* he ran up my stairs.

Sentences of this kind are rendered in Russian by means of *до того как...*, *прежде чем...*, *перед тем как...* .

Actually, however, the Past Indefinite is by far more common in the principal clause, especially with terminative verbs.

e.g. He knocked at the door twice *before* a muffled voice asked: "Who's there?" It happened *before* you came.

b) The action of one of the clauses is not fully accomplished before the action of the other clause occurs. The unaccomplished action is expressed by the Past Perfect. Sometimes there are indications of measure in such sentences.

If the unaccomplished action is expressed in the principal clause, its predicate verb is always negative in form.

e.g. They had not gone four miles *before* he understood that it was going to rain.

He had not been there for two days *before* he admitted that he should not have accepted the invitation.

Sentences of this kind are best rendered in Russian as *не успели они... как, не успев проехать и...* , etc.

If the unaccomplished action is expressed in the subordinate clause, its predicate verb is affirmative in form but negative in meaning.

e.g. I realized *before* you had been here a fortnight that you never were cut for this life.

I discovered the news *before* I had been in the house for an hour.

Sentences of this kind are generally rendered in Russian as *не прошло и двух недель... как, не пробыл я в доме и часа... как*, etc.

8) In a complex sentence with a subordinate clause of time introduced by the correlatives *scarcely... when, hardly... when, nearly... when*, and *no sooner... than*, the time relation between the two actions is of a specific character — the action of the subordinate clause takes place when the action of the principal clause is hardly accomplished yet. Hence, the Past Perfect is found in the principal clause and the Past Indefinite in the subordinate clause. Such sentences are emphatic in meaning and *scarcely, hardly* and *no sooner* may be placed at the head of the sentence with an inverted word order following.

e.g. He had *scarcely* entered the room *when* in a chair by the door he perceived Ann Chester.

She had *hardly* sat down *when* a very stout gentleman wearing a very small hat flopped into the chair opposite hers.

*No sooner*, however, had they established themselves in the house *than* he perceived to his dismay a return of her gloomy mood.

*Note.* When *scarcely, hardly* and *nearly* are used as adverbs and not as correlatives, they may be associated with different finite forms whose choice is determined by the situation.

e.g. He did not hate her, he *scarcely* seemed aware of her presence.  
I *hardly* know what to say.

### The Past Perfect Continuous

§ 33. The Past Perfect Continuous is an analytical form which is built up by means of the auxiliary verb to be in the Past Perfect and the ing-form of the notional verb (e.g. / *had been working. He had been working*, etc.). (On the formation of the ing-form see "Verbs", § 11.)

In the interrogative form the first auxiliary verb is placed before the subject (e.g. *Had you been working? Had she been working?*, etc.). In the negative form the negative particle not is placed after the first auxiliary (e.g. *We had not been working. They had not been working*, etc.). In spoken English the contracted forms *I'd, he'd, she'd, we'd, you'd, they'd* are used in affirmative and *hadn't* in negative sentences.

§ 34. The Past Perfect Continuous has two different uses which will be further referred to as **Past Perfect Continuous I** and **Past Perfect Continuous II**.

1) **Past Perfect Continuous I** serves to express an action which began before a given past moment and continued into it or up to it. In this meaning it is parallel to Past Perfect II (see "Verbs", § 30, 2). Past Perfect Continuous I may be used with the same indications of time as are already described in "Verbs", § 16, 2.

e.g. She suddenly realized that it was now completely dark and that she **had been walking** for a long while.

He knew what she **had been thinking** about since she received the telegram.

Grant Melville was charming, and quite a famous painter. He **had been coming** to North Cornwall for years, he had a shack up in the hills.

Ashenden assembled the observations that he **had been making** for the past few days.

The Past Perfect Continuous can be used with dynamic verbs of both durative and terminative meaning (see the examples above). Stative verbs express this meaning with the help of Past Perfect II (see "Verbs", § 30, 2). Past Perfect II is possible with dynamic verbs of durative meaning but it is not found at all with terminative verbs.

2) **Past Perfect Continuous II** serves to express an action which was in progress just before a given past moment and it affects the past situation in some way. The precise time limits of the action are not specified. In this meaning the Past Perfect Continuous is not parallel to Past Perfect II.

Past Perfect Continuous II is, as a rule, not associated with any indications of time.

e.g. Winifred rose from the chair\* in which she **had been sitting**.

Adeline, who **had been helping** her mother, now joined them.

She and Sylvia talked in high excited tones about an anthology of poetry they **had been reading**.

Half-heartedly I asked what she **had been thinking** about.

Adeline came across the lawn to meet him, carrying roses she **had been cutting**.

§ 35. In negative sentences the Past Perfect Continuous is not common; the Past Perfect (Non-Continuous) is preferred in them when the negation refers to the action itself but not to its circumstances (see also "Verbs", § 19).

e.g. I knew they had not corresponded for years.

§ 36. It is noteworthy that Past Perfect Continuous I and particularly Past Perfect Continuous II may sometimes be found with stative verbs.

e.g. Beside the porch he stopped to examine the web of a spider which he had been noticing for a week or more.

Certainly the medicine had steadied her; the sinking feeling she had been having was all gone.

Over tea she tried to find out whether I had been seeing Sheila.

§ 37. Note some sentence patterns in which the Present Perfect Continuous or the Past Perfect Continuous is found:

1) In a complex sentence with a subordinate clause of time introduced by *since*, whose action indicates the starting point of the action in the principal clause. Hence, the Past Indefinite is used in the subordinate-clause. As to the principal clause, the Present Perfect Continuous (or Present Perfect II) is used in it in present-time contexts (a) and the Past Perfect Continuous (or Past Perfect II) in past-time contexts (b).

e.g. a) "They are bombs. You could blow the roof of the whole of this building with what I've got here," said the lunatic. "I've been carting them from room to room *since* the war began." I've known him *since* we were kids.

b) Michael rose and clutched his hat. Wilfred had said exactly what he himself had really been thinking ever *since* he came.

Mr Bentley was a publisher because ever *since* he was a boy he had had a liking for books.

2) In a complex sentence with a subordinate clause of time introduced by the conjunctions *while* and *since* or by some connective words and expressions such as *as long as*, *during the week*, *in*

*the short time (that)*, *all the time (that)*, etc. The actions in both clauses may be parallel, starting at the same time in the past and continuing either into or up to the moment of speaking in present-time contexts (a) or into or up to a given past moment in past-time contexts (b). Accordingly, the Present Perfect Continuous (or Present Perfect II) is used in both clauses in the former case and the Past Perfect Continuous (or Past Perfect II) in the latter case.

e.g. a) Our friendship has been growing *all the time* we've been working on the project.

I've been rather shut *since* we've been here, with all this bad weather.

b) We had been sitting on our beds *while* George had been telling me this true story.

**The suit had been neither pressed nor brushed *since* he had had it.**

3) In a complex sentence with a subordinate clause of time introduced by the conjunction *when*. The action of the subordinate clause may serve to indicate a given past moment into or up to which the action of the principal clause, that had begun before that moment, continued. The duration of the action is indicated by some adverbial modifier of time. Accordingly, the Past Indefinite is found in the *when*-clause and the Past Perfect Continuous (or Past Perfect II) in the principal clause. It should be noted that this is a very commonly occurring pattern.

e.g. He had been sitting by the fire for nearly an hour *when* his mother came into the room with a letter in her hands. They had been walking for less than an hour *when* the moon suddenly appeared between the heavy clouds.

### The Future Indefinite

§ 38. The Future Indefinite is an analytical form which is built up by means of the auxiliary verbs *shall* (for the first person, singular and plural) and *will* (for the second and third persons, singular and plural) and the infinitive of the notional verb without the particle *to* (e.g. *I shall see him tomorrow. He will see them tomorrow. You will see them tomorrow*, etc.).