

PAST PERFECT

B1 | Teens / Adults | Grammar Practice | 35-45 minutes

Learn and practise | Show that one past event happened before another.

1. READ: A missed train

Read the conversation. Notice the bold grammar and how the speakers use it.

Lena: Did you make it to the concert on time?

Max: Just. The train **had already left** when I reached the station.

Lena: Oh no. What did you do?

Max: I called Jo. Luckily, she **hadn't left** home yet.

Lena: So she gave you a lift?

Max: Yes. By the time we got there, the support band **had finished**, but the main show **hadn't started**.

2. GRAMMAR: The earlier of two past events

Use had + past participle for an earlier past event. Use the past simple for the later event.

Use / form	Pattern	Example
Positive	had + past participle	The train had left.
Negative	had not + past participle	Jo hadn't left home.
Question	had + subject + past participle	Had the show started?

Order: The train left first; I arrived later. It had left when I arrived.

Clues: already, by the time, before. Had is the same for every subject.

Don't use the past perfect for every action in a simple sequence.

A. CHOOSE

Circle the correct option in each sentence.

1. The film had start / started before we arrived.
2. I had / have forgotten my ticket that day.
3. Had / Did she left before you called?
4. We hadn't ate / eaten before the meeting.
5. By ten, they had finished / finish the work.
6. I got home and made / had made a sandwich.
7. He had never flew / flown before that trip.
8. When I arrived, Jo had already went / gone.

Read each answer aloud. Explain which meaning or time clue helped you.

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Use it | Complete a context, write sentences and speak with a partner.

B. COMPLETE: Arriving at a hotel

Write the past perfect form of each verb.

1. When we reached the hotel, the tour bus _____ (leave).
2. I realised I _____ (forget) my booking confirmation.
3. Luckily, Sam _____ (save) a copy on his phone.
4. The receptionist asked if we _____ (pay) already.
5. We _____ (not / pay), so we paid at the desk.
6. By the time we got upstairs, someone _____ (deliver) our bags.

C. CHANGE THE SENTENCES

1-2: Join the ideas using the past perfect.

Example: I ate. Then Jo arrived. **I had eaten before Jo arrived.**

1. The shop closed. Then we arrived. (before)
2. I lost my key. Then I noticed. (that)

3-4: Make questions. Example: They had left. **Had they left?**

3. She had booked a room.
4. They had met before.

D. WRITE ABOUT YOU

Write three sentences about a day when something went wrong. Show what had happened earlier.

Example: **I arrived late because I had missed the bus. I had forgotten to set my alarm.**

E. SPEAK WITH A PARTNER

Tell your story. Your partner asks what happened first and what happened next.

Use **Had you...?** to check an earlier event. Swap roles.

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Answer key | Keep this page separate during student practice.

1. READ: A missed train

Sample target language from the conversation:

Max: Just. The train **had already left** when I reached the station.

Max: I called Jo. Luckily, she **hadn't left** home yet.

Max: Yes. By the time we got there, the support band **had finished**, but the main show **hadn't started**.

A. CHOOSE

- | | |
|-----------------|----------|
| 1. started | 2. had |
| 3. Had | 4. eaten |
| 5. had finished | 6. made |
| 7. flown | 8. gone |

B. COMPLETE: Arriving at a hotel

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. had left | 2. had forgotten |
| 3. had saved | 4. had paid |
| 5. hadn't paid / had not paid | 6. had delivered |

C. CHANGE THE SENTENCES

1. The shop had closed before we arrived.
2. I noticed that I had lost my key.
3. Had she booked a room?
4. Had they met before?

D. WRITE ABOUT YOU / E. SPEAK

Personal answers will vary. Check the target grammar.

Sample: I got locked out because I had left my key inside. My flatmate had gone out. Luckily, I had saved her number.

Teacher note: Accept alternative clause order. In the context exercise, practise the earlier-event past perfect even where chronological wording could allow past simple.