

Past Perfect Continuous

FORM

[had been + present participle]

Examples:

- ❖ You **had been waiting** there for more than two hours when she finally arrived.
- ❖ **Had** you **been waiting** there for more than two hours when she finally arrived?
- ❖ You **had not been waiting** there for more than two hours when she finally arrived.

Past Perfect Continuous Forms

Positive	Negative	Question
•I had been listening.	•I had not been listening.	•Had I been listening?
•You had been listening.	•You had not been listening.	•Had you been listening?
•We had been listening.	•We had not been listening.	•Had we been listening?
•They had been listening.	•They had not been listening.	•Had they been listening?
•He had been listening.	•He had not been listening.	•Had he been listening?
•She had been listening.	•She had not been listening.	•Had she been listening?
•It had been listening.	•It had not been listening.	•Had it been listening?

USE 1 Duration Before Something in the Past

We use the Past Perfect Continuous to show that something started in the past and continued up until another time in the past. "For five minutes" and "for two weeks" are both durations which can be used with the Past Perfect Continuous. Notice that this is related to the Present Perfect Continuous; however, the duration does not continue until now, it stops before something else in the past.



Examples:

- They **had been talking** for over an hour before Tony arrived.
- She **had been working** at that company for three years when it went out of business.
- How long **had you been waiting** to get on the bus?
- Mike wanted to sit down because he **had been standing** all day at work.
- James **had been teaching** at the university for more than a year before he left for Asia.
- A: How long **had you been studying** Turkish before you moved to Ankara?
B: I **had not been studying** Turkish very long.

USE 2 Cause of Something in the Past

Using the Past Perfect Continuous before another action in the past is a good way to show cause and effect.



Examples:

- Jason was tired because he **had been jogging**.
- Sam gained weight because he **had been overeating**.
- Betty failed the final test because she **had not been attending** class.



Remember:

Non-Continuous Verbs / Mixed Verbs

It is important to remember that Non-Continuous Verbs cannot be used in any continuous tenses. Also, certain non-continuous meanings for Mixed Verbs cannot be used in continuous tenses. Instead of using Past Perfect Continuous with these verbs, you must use Past Perfect.

Examples:

- The motorcycle **had been belonging** to George for years before Tina bought it. **Not Correct**
- The motorcycle **had belonged** to George for years before Tina bought it. **Correct**

ADVERB PLACEMENT

The examples below show the placement for grammar adverbs such as: always, only, never, ever, still, just, etc.

Examples:

You had **only** been waiting there for a few minutes when she arrived.

Had you **only** been waiting there for a few minutes when she arrived?