

1 **Simple past perfect tense** is a verb phrase made from the past form of the auxiliary *have* and a past participle. *Had* is often joined to pronoun subjects and to *not* as illustrated in XI, 2.

2 **Uses.** The simple past perfect is used chiefly in three situations.

a. To express the time relationship between two events in the past, particularly when the clause marker does not indicate this relationship.

MAIN CLAUSE		
S	V-Phrase	C
Prof. Baker	had already dismissed	the class . . .
Jack	had given up	trying to solve the problem . . .
George	had learned	English quite well . . .

TIME CLAUSE			
Marker	S	V	C
. . . when	he	announced	the exam.
. . . when	he	called up	Bill.
. . . by the time	his cousin	arrived.	

b. To report statements made in the simple past tense or the present perfect.

Direct speech

Professor Baker said, "I have lost my watch."

Jack said, "I gave up at six o'clock."

Nick told George, "Your father got over his illness."

vs. Reported speech

Professor Baker said that he had lost his watch.

Jack said that he had given up at six o'clock.

Nick told George that his father had gotten over his illness.

c. To express wishes and unreal conditions about the past. These uses are discussed in Lesson XIX.

Professor Baker wishes that he *had not lost* his watch.
If he *had not lost* it, he would not have been late.

3 Past perfect

Jack had spent two hours on the problem when he gave up. (The sequence of events is reflected in the verb tenses. The first event is expressed in the past perfect.)

George had lived here for six months when his cousin Nick arrived from Greece. (The sequence of events is reflected in the verb tenses. The first event is expressed in the past perfect.)

Professor Baker had already dismissed the class when he announced the exam. (The past perfect tense shows that the dismissing occurred first. The *already* indicates that the order is unusual or unexpected.)

vs. Simple past

Jack spent two hours on the problem before he gave up. (The sequence of events is expressed by the use of the time-word *before*.)

George lived here six months. Then his cousin Nick arrived from Greece. (The sequence is expressed by the use of *then* [VI, 5b].)

Professor Baker announced an exam after he dismissed the class. (The time relationship of the two events is shown by the time-word *after*.)

As you can see from the above examples, the same facts can be expressed in either tense. The past perfect is used more in formal written language than in speaking.

4 Continuous past perfect is a verb phrase made from *had* plus *been* plus *ing*-form.

5 Use. This tense is concerned with expressing the duration of an event or activity of the past which was interrupted or concluded by another past activity or event.

6 Two time expressions or their equivalents are required in the environment of a past perfect tense—either in the same sentence or in one just before or after it.

- a. T₁ must express the duration of the activity. Expressions of this type begin with *for* or *since* (XI, 7).
- b. T₂ states the time or the event which interrupted or concluded the activity.

7 Sentence pattern

S	V	P	T ₁	T ₂
The students	had been waiting		for almost ten minutes	when Prof. Baker showed up.
Bill	had been working		for two hours	when Jack called.
George	had been living	in College Town	for almost six months	when Nick came from Greece.

8 Past perfect

a. George had lived with an American family for six months when Nick arrived.
 (This sentence may suggest to some speakers that he changed his living arrangements after Nick arrived, but it does not specifically say so.)

vs. Continuous past perfect

George had been living with an American family for six months when Nick arrived.
 (This sentence may suggest to some speakers that he will continue the same living arrangements, but it does not actually say so.)

Both sentences can be used to express the same situation.

b. Professor Baker had already dismissed the class when he announced the exam.
 (The past perfect verb phrase expresses a one-time completed act. It cannot be expressed in a continuous tense.)



Most statements in the continuous can also be stated in the simple past perfect with little or no difference in meaning. Past perfect statements which refer to completed punctual acts cannot be expressed in the continuous, however. Verbs of mental state, condition, and perception (III, 8) are not used in continuous tenses.