

# Past perfect continuous (I had been doing)

**A** Study this example situation:

*yesterday morning*



Yesterday morning I got up and looked out of the window. The sun was shining, but the ground was very wet.

It **had been raining**.

It was *not* raining when I looked out of the window; the sun was shining. But it **had been** raining before.

Had been -ing is the *past perfect continuous*:

I/we/you/they he/she/it	had	(= I'd etc.) (= he'd etc.)	been	doing working playing etc.
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Some more examples:

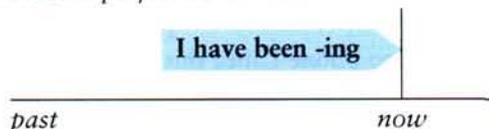
- When the boys came into the house, their clothes were dirty, their hair was untidy and one of them had a black eye. They'd **been fighting**.
- I was very tired when I got home. I'd **been working** hard all day.
- When I went to Madrid a few years ago, I stayed with a friend of mine. She'd **been living** there only a short time but knew the city very well.

**B** You can say that something **had been happening** for a period of time before something else happened:

- We'd **been playing** tennis for about half an hour when it started to rain heavily.
- George went to the doctor last Friday. He **hadn't been feeling** well for some time.

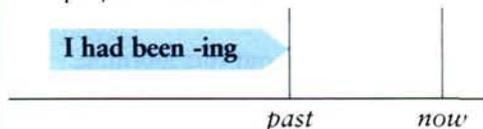
**C** Compare **have been -ing** (*present perfect continuous*) and **had been -ing** (*past perfect continuous*):

*Present perfect continuous*



- I hope the bus comes soon. I've **been waiting** for 20 minutes. (*before now*)
- James is out of breath. He **has been running**.

*Past perfect continuous*



- At last the bus came. I'd **been waiting** for 20 minutes. (*before the bus came*)
- James was out of breath. He **had been running**.

**D** Compare **was -ing** (*past continuous*) and **had been -ing**:

- It **wasn't raining** when we went out. The sun **was shining**. But it **had been raining**, so the ground was wet.
- Cathy **was sitting** in an armchair resting. She was tired because she'd **been working** very hard.

**E** Some verbs (for example, **know** and **like**) are not normally used in the continuous:

- We were good friends. We **had known** each other for years. (*not had been knowing*)

For a list of these verbs, see Unit 4A.

## 16.1 Read the situations and make sentences from the words in brackets.

- 1 I was very tired when I arrived home.  
(I / work / hard all day) I'd been working hard all day.
- 2 The two boys came into the house. They had a football and they were both very tired.  
(they / play / football) .....
- 3 I was disappointed when I had to cancel my holiday.  
(I / look / forward to it) .....
- 4 Ann woke up in the middle of the night. She was frightened and didn't know where she was.  
(she / dream) .....
- 5 When I got home, Tom was sitting in front of the TV. He had just turned it off.  
(he / watch / a film) .....

## 16.2 Read the situations and complete the sentences.

- 1 We played tennis yesterday. Half an hour after we began playing, it started to rain.  
We had been playing for half an hour when it started to rain.
- 2 I had arranged to meet Tom in a restaurant. I arrived and waited for him. After 20 minutes I suddenly realised that I was in the wrong restaurant.  
I ..... for 20 minutes when I .....  
..... the wrong restaurant.
- 3 Sarah got a job in factory. Five years later the factory closed down.  
At the time the factory ....., Sarah .....  
..... there for five years.
- 4 I went to a concert last week. The orchestra began playing. After about ten minutes a man in the audience suddenly started shouting.  
The orchestra ..... when .....

This time make your own sentence:

- 5 I began walking along the road. I .....  
when .....

## 16.3 Put the verb into the most suitable form, past continuous (I was doing), past perfect (I had done) or past perfect continuous (I had been doing).

- 1 It was very noisy next door. Our neighbours were having (have) a party.
- 2 We were good friends. We had known (know) each other for years.
- 3 John and I went for a walk. I had difficulty keeping up with him because he ..... (walk) so fast.
- 4 Sue was sitting on the ground. She was out of breath. She ..... (run).
- 5 When I arrived, everybody was sitting round the table with their mouths full. They ..... (eat).
- 6 When I arrived, everybody was sitting round the table and talking. Their mouths were empty, but their stomachs were full. They ..... (eat).
- 7 Jim was on his hands and knees on the floor. He ..... (look) for his contact lens.
- 8 When I arrived, Kate ..... (wait) for me. She was annoyed with me because I was late and she ..... (wait) for a long time.
- 9 I was sad when I sold my car. I ..... (have) it for a very long time.
- 10 We were extremely tired at the end of the journey. We ..... (travel) for more than 24 hours.