

I'm not a robot



The simple past and the past perfect, also past perfect simple, both express completed actions that took place in the past. The simple past is the default past tense; it expresses past actions, often in sequential order. The past perfect is the past of the past; it describes an action or event that took place before another point or action in the past (usually expressed in the simple past). Example: When Naomi arrived, the party had already started. action 1: beginning of the party; action 2: Naomi's arrival. Learn about the difference between the simple past and the past perfect in English grammar with Lingolia, then practise using these tenses in the interactive exercises. The table below shows when to use the English simple past and past perfect tenses. Signal words can help us to recognise which tense to use in a sentence. Below is a list of signal words for the simple past and past perfect tenses. After/before/when with Simple Past and Past Perfect The simple past and the past perfect simple share some signal words. The table below explains the differences for three of the most common signal words. Improve your English with Lingolia. Each grammar topic comes with one free exercise where you can review the basics, as well as many more Lingolia Plus exercises where you can practise according to your level. Check your understanding by hovering over the info bubbles for simple explanations and handy tips. Simple Past/Past Perfect free exercise Simple Past Past Perfect Simple (1) B1 Simple Past Past Perfect Simple (2) B1 Simple Past Past Perfect Simple (3) B1 Simple Past Past Perfect Simple (4) B1 Simple Past Past Perfect Simple (5) B1 Simple Past Past Perfect Simple: order of events B1 Simple Past Past Perfect Simple: signal words B1 Simple Past Past Perfect Simple: a mystery caller B1 Simple Past Past Perfect Simple: a ghost on the beach? B1 Gapfill Multiple choice Drag-and-drop Mixed See also explanations on Simple Past and Past Perfect Simple Use We use Simple Past if we give past events in the order in which they occurred. However, when we look back from a certain time in the past to tell what had happened before, we use Past Perfect. Normal order in the past or looking back to an event before a certain time in the past? Do you just want to tell what happened some time in the past or do you want to tell what had happened before/up to a certain time in the past? Signal Words *Note: "After" is only used as a signal word for Past Perfect if it is followed by a subject + verb, meaning that one action had been completed before another action began (the new action is in Simple Past). Example: After the family had had breakfast, they went to the zoo. However, if "after" is followed by object + subject + verb, the verb belongs to the new action and is therefore in Simple Past. Example: After her visit to the zoo, Jane was exhausted. More exceptions with signal words When Depending on the situation, "when" can be used with Simple Past or Past Perfect. Compare the following examples: Example: When Jane saw the elephants, she was amazed. (at the same time) When Jane had seen the elephants, she wanted to see the giraffes. (second action happened after the first action had been completed) When Jane went to see the elephants, she had already seen the lions. (second action had been completed when the first action took place) Before "Before" as well can either be used with Simple Past or Past Perfect. If the action after "before" is a new action, use Simple Past. If the action after "before" started (and was not completed) before a certain time in the past, use Past Perfect. Compare the following examples: Example: Jane had read a lot about elephants before she went to the zoo. Jane went to the zoo before she had finished reading her new book about elephants. Exercises on Simple Past and Past Perfect Simple Tests on Simple Past and Past Perfect Simple In my textbook, The English Tenses (see the timeline comparing all the tenses here), each tense is presented with its full uses and examples, and is then compared to the most likely alternative. In English, we can often use more than one tense for the same meaning, so it is important to know exactly why we should use one and not another. This article is taken from a chapter in the book, to give a brief comparison between the very specific uses of the past simple and the past perfect, and where the two are most likely to be compared. The past perfect is used to show that an event finished before another event, while the past simple shows an event finished. The main purpose is to demonstrate a sequence of events, so the past perfect is more appropriate before another event. I had seen the film already, so I did not watch it again. If the time that the event finished is not important, or is easily understood, it is often possible to use either the past simple or the past perfect. The choice is then a matter of style. I had travelled two miles before I ran out of petrol. I travelled two miles before I ran out of petrol. These sentences essentially tell us the same information, and would be understood the same way. The past perfect can also show that one completed action had an impact on the action that followed, though. I ate three sandwiches before dinner so I was not hungry. (These simple statements create a stop-start sequence.) I had eaten three sandwiches before dinner so I was not hungry. (This sentence shows a more direct influence from one action to the next.) These sentences can seem almost identical in meaning, but the past perfect can help to create more flowing and more carefully linked sentences. The past perfect can also emphasise that a past action was actively done. He walked to the house and saw that the window was broken. He walked to the house and saw that the window had been broken. In the first sentence, the past simple only tells us the window's condition (it was broken). With the past perfect, we know that someone or something actively broke it (it had been broken caused by someone or something). These differences are subtle, and choosing one tense or the other will not always cause confusion, or be entirely correct or incorrect. Learning how to choose between them flexibly, and accurately, is a large part of mastering the English language. For more detailed discussion of the tenses, please read my full textbook The English Tenses. Share on . Learn English Vocabulary Start learning categorized English vocabulary on Langeek. Click to start Page 2 Share This detailed lesson covers the Past Perfect Tense in English, featuring examples and a quiz to test your knowledge. Home Grammar tenses past perfect past perfect past tenses perfect tenses Page 3 Single or Repeated Actions Completed in the Past The past simple tense is used to describe an action that took place once in the past and is now finished. This tense refers to actions that started and ended in the past. In other words, it describes a completed action in the past. Here are some examples: Example: I went to the cinema yesterday. The past simple tense is usually used with adverbs of time like 'yesterday', 'last week/month/year', 'the other day', 'when I was young' or 'a long time ago', etc. They all refer to a point of time in the past. Look at these examples: Example: I met my wife a long time ago. Napoleon attacked Russia in 1812. The past simple tense can also be used to talk about something that happened repeatedly in the past, often indicating that an action was done regularly and habitually. For example: Example: I often brought my lunch to school. They always enjoyed visiting their friends. Page 4 In the present simple tense, the auxiliary verb 'do' is used to form negative sentences. For first and second-person singular and plural, as well as the third-person plural subjects, we use 'don't'. For third-person singular pronouns, we use 'doesn't'. To negate a sentence with I/you/we/they as the subject, do not (don't) is added before the base form of the main verb. Example: Jessica and Harry don't want to get married and they can't afford a house. If the sentence has 'he/she/it' as the subject, doesn't (doesn't) is added before the main verb, without 's'. Example: My sister doesn't wake up early. However, if the main verb of the sentence is to be, there is no need for adding the auxiliary 'do'. Simply add 'not' after the 'to' verb to negate the sentence. Example: Page 5 Share In this article, you'll dive into the imperative mood, like 'Finish your homework'. Detailed explanations and a quiz are included to test your knowledge. Home Grammar moods imperative mood Page 6 While many stative verbs cannot be used in the passive voice because they do not represent an action, some stative verbs referring to mental processes, perception, and opinion, can be used in the passive voice; for example: think, understand, believe, love, hate, consider, know, expect, assume, etc. The difference between the active and passive is that the passive does not present the idea as a personal opinion or belief. Look at the examples: Example: I love this book. This book is loved. We expect her to arrive soon. She is expected to arrive soon. Page 7 Despite all their efforts, the team failed to score. Here too, "failed" is the finite verb and "to score" is non-finite because it does not show tense. Page 8 Share In this lesson we learn about phrases, which are essential groups of words that function together to add meaning to a sentence without containing a subject and a verb. Clear explanations and practice exercises to help you learn. Home Grammar phrases and clauses noun phrases Page 9 Share In this lesson, master verb complements, which are essential parts of a sentence that complete the meaning of a verb. Clear explanations and practice exercises to help you learn. Home Grammar grammatical functions verb complements direct objects indirect objects subject pronouns object subjects of prepositions Page 10 In the simplest terms, adjectives are words that describe or modify nouns. They provide essential details that help us understand the size, color, shape, quantity, or other qualities of a noun. For instance, in the sentence "She wore a beautiful red dress," both beautiful and red are adjectives, describing the noun dress. The Past Perfect and Past Simple tenses are both used to talk about past events, but they have different functions. The Past Simple is used to describe completed actions in the past, while the Past Perfect is used to show that one past event happened before another past event. For example, in the sentence "I had already eaten dinner when she arrived," the Past Perfect (had eaten) indicates that the action of eating dinner happened before the action of her arrival. On the other hand, the Past Simple (arrived) is used to describe the action that occurred after the Past Perfect action. Overall, the Past Perfect is used to establish a clear sequence of events in the past, while the Past Simple is used to describe individual actions without emphasizing their order. When it comes to discussing past events, two commonly used verb tenses in English are the Past Perfect and the Past Simple. Both tenses allow us to express actions or states that occurred in the past, but they have distinct attributes that set them apart. In this article, we will explore the differences and similarities between the Past Perfect and the Past Simple, examining their usage, formation, and implications in various contexts. Usage The Past Simple tense is typically used to describe completed actions or states in the past. It is used when the time of the action is specified or understood, and it does not necessarily have a direct connection to the present. For example: "Shehad visited her grandparents before she went to the party." "Hehad played soccer for many years before he retired." Formation The formation of the Past Simple tense involves using the base form of the verb and adding the appropriate ending based on the subject. For regular verbs, the ending is typically "-ed" or "-d" for regular verbs ending in a consonant or vowel, respectively. However, irregular verbs have their own unique forms. For example: "Iworked late last night." "Theyate dinner at the new restaurant." "Sheran in the marathon." On the other hand, the Past Perfect tense is formed by using the auxiliary verb "had" followed by the past participle of the main verb. The past participle is typically formed by adding "-ed" to regular verbs or using the irregular form for irregular verbs. For example: "Shehad visited her grandparents before the party." "Hehad played soccer for many years before retiring." "Theyhad already eaten dinner when we arrived." Implications The use of the Past Simple tense often implies that the action or state is completed and has no direct relevance to the present. It is commonly used to narrate past events or to describe habitual actions in the past. For example: "Shevisited her grandparents every summer when she was a child." "Heplayed the piano for hours yesterday." On the other hand, the Past Perfect tense implies a relationship between two past actions or states. It suggests that one action occurred before another and helps establish a clear sequence of events. It is often used to express regrets, hypothetical situations, or to provide background information. For example: "Shehad already eaten dinner when the guests arrived, so she couldn't join them." "Hehad never seen such a beautiful sunset before he visited the beach." Conclusion In conclusion, while both the Past Simple and the Past Perfect tenses are used to discuss past events, they have distinct attributes that differentiate them. The Past Simple is used to describe completed actions or states in the past, while the Past Perfect emphasizes the sequence of events and indicates an action that occurred before another action or a specific point in the past. Understanding the appropriate usage and formation of these tenses is crucial for effective communication and accurate expression of past events in English. Comparisons may contain inaccurate information about people, places, or facts. Please report any issues. Home English Past Simple vs Past Perfect: Understanding the Key Differences Understanding the distinctions between the Past Simple and Past Perfect tenses is critical for effective communication in English. Both tenses are used to describe past events, but they serve different purposes and convey different nuances. This article provides an in-depth comparison of these two tenses, offering clear explanations, practical examples, and tips to help you master their usage. By the end, you'll be equipped to use these tenses accurately and confidently in both spoken and written English. 2. Overview of the Past Simple Tense The Past Simple Tense is one of the most commonly used tenses in English. It describes completed actions that took place at a specific time in the past. Structure of the Past Simple Tense Subject + past tense verb (regular verbs add -ed; irregular verbs vary) Examples: She visited the museum yesterday. They bought a new car last week. He studied hard for the test. Use the Past Simple Tense for actions that are finished and have no connection to the present. 3. Overview of the Past Perfect Tense The Past Perfect Tense is used to describe actions that were completed before another action in the past. It emphasizes the sequence of events, making it a valuable tool for storytelling and clarifying timelines. Structure of the Past Perfect Tense Subject + had + past participle Examples: By the time she arrived, they had already left. He had finished his homework before the movie started. They had never seen a shooting star until last night. Use the Past Perfect Tense to highlight actions completed before a specific point in the past. 4. Key Differences Between Past Simple and Past Perfect The Past Simple and Past Perfect tenses serve distinct purposes, and understanding their differences is essential for accurate communication. Here's a breakdown of their key distinctions: 1. Timeline and Sequence Past Simple: Describes actions that occurred at a specific point in the past without reference to other actions. Past Perfect: Indicates actions completed before another past action, establishing a clear sequence of events. Examples: Past Simple: She left the office at 5 PM. Past Perfect: She had left the office before the meeting started. 2. Use of Time Markers Past Simple: Commonly used with specific time markers such as yesterday, last week, in 2020. Past Perfect: Often paired with time expressions like by the time, before, after. Examples: Past Simple: They watched the game last night. Past Perfect: They had watched the game before going out for dinner. 3. Emphasis and Context The Past Perfect is particularly useful in storytelling and narratives to provide context or explain cause-and-effect relationships: Past Simple: The train departed at 9 AM. Past Perfect: The train had departed before she reached the station. Use the Past Perfect Tense to highlight actions completed before a specific point in the past or another past action. 5. Common Uses of the Past Simple Tense The Past Simple Tense is widely used in everyday communication and storytelling. Here are its primary applications: 1. Describing Completed Actions Use the Past Simple for actions that were completed at a specific time in the past: She traveled to Japan last year. We finished the project yesterday. 2. Narrating Past Events This tense is ideal for recounting past events or experiences. He attended the concert and enjoyed every moment. They visited the museum and took many pictures. 3. Stating Facts About the Past Use it to declare facts that occurred in history or ones life: World War II ended in 1945. She graduated from college in 2018. The Past Simple is your go-to tense for actions that occurred and concluded at a known time in the past. 6. Common Uses of the Past Perfect Tense The Past Perfect Tense is essential for expressing relationships between two past events. Here are its primary applications: 1. Showing Sequence of Events The Past Perfect highlights which action occurred first in a sequence: She had completed her homework before the movie started. They had left the party by the time we arrived. 2. Indicating Cause-and-Effect Relationships It explains why something happened by providing the necessary context: He was tired because he had worked all day. The garden looked beautiful because it had been cleaned earlier. 3. Narrating Experiences Use the Past Perfect to refer to experiences or actions completed at a specific time in the past: I had never seen such a stunning sunset before that evening. She had already read the book before watching the movie adaptation. Use the Past Perfect to establish context, provide clarity, and show a relationship between past actions. 7. How to Choose the Right Tense Choosing between the Past Simple and Past Perfect depends on the context of your sentence. Here are some steps to guide you: Step 1: Identify the Timeline Determine if your sentence involves a single event or a sequence of actions: Use Past Simple: For standalone actions that occurred in the past. Example: She visited Paris last summer. Use Past Perfect: For actions that happened before another past action. Example: She had visited Paris before she moved to London. Step 2: Consider the Context If providing background or explaining an events cause, opt for the Past Perfect: They had prepared thoroughly, so they performed well. Step 3: Look for Time Markers Time markers such as by the time, before, and after often indicate the need for the Past Perfect: By the time we arrived, they had finished dinner. Use the Past Perfect when the timeline requires clarity about which action occurred first. 8. Real-World Examples Here are practical examples to demonstrate the use of Past Simple and Past Perfect in various contexts: In Conversations Past Simple: I saw her at the mall yesterday. Past Perfect: I had seen her before she left for New York. In Writing Past Simple: The team won the championship last year. Past Perfect: They had trained rigorously before the tournament. In Storytelling Past Simple: He found an old photograph in the attic. Past Perfect: He had forgotten about the photograph until he found it. Real-world examples help reinforce your understanding of when to use each tense effectively. 9. Common Errors and How to Avoid Them Confusing the Past Simple and Past Perfect is a common challenge for learners. Here are some mistakes to watch out for: Error 1: Using Past Simple Instead of Past Perfect Incorrect: They finished dinner before we arrived. Correct: They had finished dinner before we arrived. Error 2: Overusing Past Perfect Incorrect: She had gone to the store and then bought groceries. Correct: She went to the store and bought groceries. Error 3: Omitting Had in Past Perfect Incorrect: By the time he arrived, I finished my work. Correct: By the time he arrived, I had finished my work. Always use had in the Past Perfect to avoid confusion with the Past Simple. 10. Conclusion Understanding the differences between the Past Simple and Past Perfect tenses allows for more precise and effective communication. Use the Past Simple for actions that occurred at a specific time in the past, and the Past Perfect to show actions completed before another past event. By mastering these tenses, you'll improve your writing, storytelling, and everyday conversations. Remember, practice is the key to fluency, so incorporate these tenses into your daily language use to solidify your understanding. Start applying these rules today and take your English grammar skills to the next level! The Past Simple tense is used to describe actions that happened at a specific time in the past. These actions are usually completed. Past Simple for specific time e.g. 'an hour ago' I visited Paris last summer. She finished her homework an hour ago. a. It's often used with time expressions like yesterday, last week, in 2010, etc. b. Indicates a specific moment in the past. Learn how to recognise and use the Past Simple. Past Continuous, Past Perfect, Past Perfect Continuous, and 'used to' in context. Checkout the Youtube Video-> Learn English Through Stories - A Fun Family Tale Watch and Learn! For video lessons that bring this content to life, subscribe to our YouTube channel. Answer: The Past Perfect tense is used to describe an action that was completed before another action or a specific point in the past. Its often used to show the sequence of events. I had visited Paris before I moved to London. Past Perfect for the 'earlier past' She had finished her homework by the time her friends arrived. a. Often used with expressions like: b. Indicates an earlier past action in relation to another past event. Past Simple: [Subject] + [Past form of the verb] e.g. I walked, She played, They ate Past Perfect: [Subject] + [Had] + [Past participle of the verb] e.g. I had walked, She had played, They had eaten Use the Past Simple when youre talking about a specific event that happened and was completed in the past. -Past Simple: I met John yesterday. (A specific event that happened in the past)-Use the Past Perfect when you need to show that one event happened before another past event.-Past Perfect: I had met John before the party started. (An event that happened before another past event)Try these exercises to test your understanding of Past Simple and Past Perfect tenses: Exercise 1: Fill in the blanks with the correct form of the verb in brackets: (a) By the time we _____ (arrive), the movie _____ (start) (b) She _____ (finish) her work before she _____ (go) out. Exercise 2: Rewrite the sentences using the Past Perfect tense where appropriate: (a) I read the book before I watched the movie. (b) He left the office after he finished the report. (a) I had read the book before I watched the movie. (b) He left the office after he had finished the report. The following story allows you to clearly see how the different past tenses are used to show the sequence of events and actions in the story. Maria had always dreamed of visiting the ancient city of Petra. Last year, she finally made her dream come true. She bought a plane ticket to Jordan and planned her trip meticulously. Before she left, she had done extensive research about the city's history and landmarks. She read numerous travel blogs and spoke to several friends who had visited Petra before. When Maria arrived in Jordan, she was amazed by the vibrant culture and friendly people. She took a bus from Amman to Wadi Musa, the town closest to Petra. By the time she reached her hotel, she had already felt a sense of excitement building up. The next morning, Maria woke up early. She had prepared her backpack the night before, making sure she had packed enough water and snacks for the day. As she walked through the narrow Siq, the main entrance to Petra, she was in awe of the towering sandstone walls. When she finally saw the Treasury, she was speechless. It was more magnificent than she had imagined. She spent the entire day exploring the ancient city, visiting the Monastery, the Royal Tombs, and the Roman Theatre. Maria felt exhausted but happy. By the end of the day, Maria felt exhausted but incredibly happy. She had experienced something truly unforgettable. As she sat down to rest, she thought about all the things she had learned and the people she had met along the way. Past Simple (actions completed at a specific time in the past): Check out the links below for more related content. Love This Content? Get more delivered to you! Sign up for our weekly email with fresh ideas for learning English. For more related posts check out the links below. Question? Contact us on the form below. Jack: Hey, Rich. What have you been up to? Rich: Well, it was my birthday yesterday. Jack: Oh! Brilliant! Happy Birthday! What did you do? Rich: It was really nice actually. When I got home from work I discovered that my family had arranged a surprise birthday party. Jack: A nice surprise? Rich: Yes, it was. Theyd invited some family around, had wrapped a few presents and theyd made a cake. It was really nice. Jack: Did they manage to fit all the candles on the cake? Rich: Very funny! No, they didnt I got one candle per decade these days! Welcome - Past Simple v Past Perfect Rich: Hello my names Rich Jack: and Im Jack Rich: and welcome to this weeks Premier Skills English podcast Jack: Where we talk about football and help you with your English Jack: Whats happening this week, Rich? Rich: In this weeks podcast, we are going to talk about grammar and specifically were going to talk about the past Jack: Were going to look at how we use the past simple and the past perfect. These are often called tenses and you may have seen them called the past simple tense and past perfect tense in your English books or in English class. Rich: Were just going to call them the past simple and past perfect and were going to compare them. Jack: Thats right. Were going to look at when you should use the past simple and when you should use the past perfect. Rich: Why are we looking at this grammar point this week, Jack? Jack: Well, Im happy that you asked me that. Last week, we got a message on the website from one of our regular listeners - Milos from Serbia. He said that his biggest problem when learning English is grammar and he said that he had a specific problem with the past perfect. Rich: So, were going to help Milos from Serbia today. Jack: Exactly. And if you have any language problems you would like us to talk about in our podcasts, send us an email or a message on the website. Well try to help you in a future podcast. Rich: Before we move on, wed just like to thank an English teacher who got in touch with us this week. Jack: Richard Hill, who is an English teacher based in Cyprus, contacted us as he had spotted a few spelling mistakes or, as I prefer to call them - typos, on a few of our pages. Rich: If anybody notices anything that needs changing on the site were always happy to hear from you and well make the changes as quickly as we can. Jack: Thanks Richard for your support and a big hello to you and all your students. Rich: And wed also like to remind you about the Activity Week thats live in the Premier Skills English Live section. There are six lessons about the language of health and fitness. If you complete the lessons and pass the end of activity week test, you can get a certificate. Jack: Weve got another Activity Week coming up, too. On Monday the 12th March, were going to be live on Facebook to talk about a new Activity Week all about films and how watching films can help you learn English. Rich: Thats right. Im really looking forward to it. Lets get back to the podcast. Jack: Dont forget to listen to the end because we have a new football phrase for you to guess. Topic Focus Rich: So, we are going to do two roleplays. In both roleplays, you will hear examples of the past simple and past perfect. After the roleplays, we will look at the language in a little bit more detail. Jack: We want you to listen to the roleplay and answer this question. What is Rich upset about? Roleplay 1 Jack: How was class? Rich: It was embarrassing! Some of the students are really cheeky! Jack: Whats the matter? They cant be that bad. Theyre only 12 years old. Rich: I know, I know, but guess what happened today? Jack: I have no idea but I think youre about to tell me. Rich: When I arrived everybody was sitting very quietly. I thought this is good because they are normally really noisy. The week before, there had been paper aeroplanes flying about all over the place. Jack: So it was good then. A nice calm disciplined classroom. Thats good. Rich: Good? Then I sat down ..., on the floor! Someone had replaced my chair with a broken one. The students, of course, all started laughing! Jack: Oh dear! Thats not funny at all! Well, maybe a little bit. And, how was the rest of the class? Rich: It was alright I suppose. Jack: There you go. Youre overreacting. Theyre not that bad and I think its always good to inject a bit of humour at the beginning of class. Rich: Mmm, maybe but not at my expense! Rich: Here is the second roleplay. We want you to answer this question. What is Jack upset about? Roleplay 2 Jack: Alright? Rich: Im all right but you have a face like thunder. Whats up? Jack: Computers! Thats whats up? Rich: Ah! Jack: I was writing this weeks podcast offline because Id decided to go to a cafe to work a bit from there. Rich: Coffee and cake? Jack: Just a coffee actually. Anyway, before Id had my coffee the waiter came over to tell me that the wifi wasnt working so I had to work offline. Rich: Dangerous! Jack: Yes, indeed. Well, Id nearly finished when my laptop crashed! Rich: Disaster! Jack: If Id had just a few minutes more, Id have been able to finish it. Ive got to write it all over again now! Rich: You should have had some cake! Language Focus Jack: In the roleplays, you probably heard lots of examples of the past perfect and in this language focus were going to give you three tips about using the past perfect when youre writing and speaking. Rich: And then we have a task for you to do to show your understanding of the past perfect and how it is different from the past simple. Jack: But, before we look at those three bits of advice, lets remind everyone what the past perfect is. Rich: We usually use the past perfect when we are talking about two things in the past and one of them happened before the other. Jack: In the first roleplay, Rich sat on a broken chair and fell on the floor. What happened before Rich tried to sit down? Rich: One of my students replaced my chair with a broken chair. Jack: So when Rich told me about the various contexts. In Conversations Past Simple: I saw her at the mall yesterday. Past Perfect: I had seen her before she left for New York. In Writing Past Simple: The team won the championship last year. Past Perfect: They had trained rigorously before the tournament. In Storytelling Past Simple: He found an old photograph in the attic. Past Perfect: He had forgotten about the photograph until he found it. Jack said he had nearly finished his work when his laptop crashed. Jack: Yes - thats what made me angry. I hate computers sometimes. Rich: We create the past perfect by using had and the past participle. The past participle is the third form of the verb, for example, gone is the past participle of go. Go, went, gone. Taken is the past participle of take. Take, took, taken. Jack: So, those are the basics. Now, were going to share three tips that will help you when deciding to use the past perfect or not. Tip 1 Rich: Its not always necessary to use the past perfect when we are talking about two or more events that happened at different times in the past. Jack: Thats right. Lets look at a couple of examples. The first one is: Zlatan Ibrahimovic had played in many countries before he played in the Premier League. Rich: This sentence is correct but because the order of events is made clear by using before you can also use the past simple: Zlatan Ibrahimovic played in many countries before he played in the Premier League. Jack: Another example from the roleplay is: before Id had my coffee the waiter came over. The past perfect could be replaced by the past simple here and the meaning would still be clear because the word before makes the order of events clear. Rich: In the example: I sat down and I realised the chair had been replaced we need the past perfect to show that the chair had been replaced at an earlier time. Tip 2 Jack: Use contractions when you use the past perfect. If you look back at the roleplays you can see that we dont usually say I had or they had we say Id, youd and theyd. Rich: Jack said: Id nearly finished when my laptop crashed. Jack: And Rich said: theyd made him a cake and theyd wrapped a few presents when he was speaking about his birthday at the start of this podcast. Rich: Students always ask me about the structure had had. Its important to remember that had can be an auxiliary verb and a main verb. So an example sentence using had had could be: I had had a good breakfast so I left the house feeling full and happy. Jack: Or because the auxiliary verb is usually contracted we could say: Id had a good breakfast so I left the house feeling full and happy. Rich: And you can see another example of this in the earlier roleplay when Jack said: Before Id had my coffee the waiter came over. Tip 3

Past simple vs past perfect. Why use present perfect instead of past simple. When to use simple past vs past perfect.