

The past perfect

Study this example situation:

At 10.30

PAUL

Half an hour later

SARAH

Sarah went to a party last week. Paul went to the party too but they didn't see each other. Paul went home at 10.30 and Sarah arrived at 11 o'clock. So:

When Sarah arrived at the party, Paul wasn't there. He **had gone** home.

Had gone is the *past perfect (simple)*:

I/we/they/you he/she/it	had	(= I'd etc.) (= he'd etc.)	gone seen finished etc.
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The past perfect simple is **had + past participle** (gone/seen/finished etc.). For a list of irregular verbs, see Appendix 1.

Sometimes we talk about something that happened in the past:

- Sarah **arrived** at the party.

This is the *starting point* of the story. Then, if we want to talk about things that happened *before* this time, we use the past perfect (**had...**):

- When Sarah arrived at the party, Paul **had** already **gone** home.

Some more examples:

- When we got home last night, we found that somebody **had broken** into the flat.
- Karen didn't want to come to the cinema with us because she **had** already **seen** the film.
- At first I thought I'd **done** the right thing, but I soon realised that I'd **made** a serious mistake.
- The man sitting next to me on the plane was very nervous. He **hadn't flown** before. / He **had** never **flown** before.

Had done (past perfect) is the past of **have done** (present perfect). Compare:

<i>present perfect</i>	<i>past perfect</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is that woman? I've never seen her before. • We aren't hungry. We've just had lunch. • The house is dirty. They haven't cleaned it for weeks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I didn't know who she was. I'd never seen her before. (= before that time) • We weren't hungry. We'd just had lunch. • The house was dirty. They hadn't cleaned it for weeks.

Compare the past perfect (**I had done**) and past simple (**I did**):

- 'Was Tom at the party when you arrived?' 'No, he **had** already **gone** home.'
- but* 'Was Tom there when you arrived?' 'Yes, but he **went** home soon afterwards.'
- Ann wasn't at home when I phoned. She **was** in London.
- but* Ann **had** just **got** home when I phoned. She **had been** in London.

1 Choose the right solution between the past simple and the past perfect:

From: Nonna@zapnet.com
To: GHL@zapnet.com
Cc: Margo35@kwikmail.co.uk
Subject: INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CONFERENCE

Hll

Thought you'd like to know that the conference was very successful. ☺ The talks (1) were / had been really interesting and all the speakers (2) had prepared / prepared their material very thoroughly. Everyone agreed we should do the same next year.

However ☹ there were some problems with the conference centre. When we (3) arrived / had arrived, we (4) discovered / had discovered that the manager (5) reserved / had reserved the wrong room for us. This meant that we (6) didn't have / hadn't had enough space. Unfortunately, he couldn't let us have the larger room because he (7) gave / had given it to another group, which was even bigger than ours. ☹☹

He (8) also misunderstood / had also misunderstood the letter explaining what food we (9) wanted / had wanted. In fact, we (10) suspected / had suspected that he (11) lost / had lost it. I don't recommend using that place again!

CU
Nonna

2 Read the situations and write sentences from the words in brackets:

1. You went to Jill's house but she wasn't here. (she/go/out) She had gone out.
2. You went back to your home town after many years. It wasn't the same as before. (it/change/ a lot)
3. I invited Rachel to the party but she couldn't come. (she/arrange/to do something else)
4. You went to the cinema last night. You arrived late. (the film/already/begin)
5. I was very pleased to see Tom again after such a long time. (I/not see/him for 5 years)
6. I offered Su something to eat but she wasn't hungry. (she/just/have/breakfast)

3 Put the verbs into the correct form, past perfect or past simple:

1. "Was Tom at the party when you arrived?" "No, he had already gone home (go)
2. I felt very tired when I get home, so I _____ (go) straight home.
3. The house was very quiet when I go home. Everybody _____ (go) to bed.
4. Sorry I'm late. The car _____ (break) down on my way here.
5. We were driving along the road when we _____ (see) a car which _____ (break) down, so we _____ (stop) to see if we could help.