

# Past perfect examples

The past perfect shows that an event in the past happened **before** another event in the past.

## Example sentences



- (1) Lisa **couldn't** pay. She **had forgotten** her purse.  
(2) When Peter **arrived**, Sue **had already left** the bar.



► The past perfect is used to say that one past action followed another. The action in the past perfect happened earlier.

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## Example sentences



- (3) She **had known** him for years when he **told** her that he was gay.  
(4) When I **visited** John in the hospital, he **had been there** for three months.



► We can also use the past perfect to speak about a state (Zustand) that began before a point of time in the past and lasted up to that point of time.

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## Comparison: past tense ↔ past perfect

### Example sentence



- (5) When Roy's girlfriend **arrived** he **had cooked** the dinner.



► The dinner is ready when she arrives.

An event in the past perfect happened earlier than the events in the past tense.

## Example sentence



(6) When Roy's girlfriend **arrived** he **cooked** the dinner.



► He starts cooking the dinner *after* she arrives.

Several (mehrere) events in the past tense are seen as a sequence of events (Abfolge von Ereignissen) in the past (and happened in the order in which they are named in the text). This is especially common in stories etc.

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