

# Answer Key

Past Perfect Continuous  
(I had been doing)

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English Grammar in Use — Unit 16  
12 Exercises • Complete Solutions with Explanations  
January 20, 2026

## Scoring Summary

Section	Total Points
EASY (Exercises 1-4)	36 points
MEDIUM (Exercises 5-8)	44 points
HARD (Exercises 9-12)	35 points
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>115 points</b>

## — EASY EXERCISES —

### 1 Exercise 1: Form the Past Perfect Continuous (10 points)

#### Answers

1. He **had been working** all day.
2. It **had been raining** for hours.
3. They **had been waiting** since 3 o'clock.
4. She **had been studying** English for two years.
5. We **had been living** in London before we moved.
6. I **had been running**, so I was out of breath.
7. He **hadn't been sleeping** well lately.
8. They **had been traveling** for six months.
9. She **had been sitting** in the same position for hours.
10. The cat **had been lying** in the sun all afternoon.

#### Spelling Notes

- sit → **sitting** (double the consonant: CVC pattern)
- lie → **lying** (change -ie to -y before -ing)
- travel → **traveling/travelling** (both spellings accepted)

**Scoring:** 1 point per correct answer. Total: 10 points.

## 2 Exercise 2: Make Questions (8 points)

### Answers

1. **What had she been doing** before you arrived?
2. **How long had they been living** in Paris before they moved to London?
3. **Had it been raining** before you left the house?
4. **Why had he been crying** when you found him?
5. **How long had you been studying** before you passed the exam?
6. **Where had they been staying** before they found an apartment?
7. **Who had she been talking** to on the phone for so long?
8. **Had the children been playing** outside before it started raining?

### Question Formation

**Structure:** (Question word) + **had** + subject + **been** + verb-**ing**?

- Yes/No questions: *Had you been waiting...?*
- Wh- questions: *How long had you been waiting...?*

**Scoring:** 1 point per correct question. Total: 8 points.

### 3 Exercise 3: Affirmative, Negative, or Question? (10 points)

#### Answers

1. (+) It **had been raining**.
2. (-) I **hadn't been working** hard.
3. (?) **Had you been waiting** long when she finally called?
4. (+) He **had been crying**.
5. (-) They **hadn't been paying** attention.
6. (?) How long **had she been learning** Spanish before she moved to Madrid?
7. (+) We **had been hiking** all day.
8. (-) The team **hadn't been practicing** enough.
9. (?) **Had he been drinking** before the accident?
10. (+) She **had been living** there for years.

**Scoring:** 1 point per correct answer. Total: 10 points.

### 4 Exercise 4: Match the Cause and Effect (8 points)

#### Answers

Effect	Cause	Explanation
1	D	He was out of breath because he <b>had been running</b> .
2	A	Her eyes were red because she <b>had been crying</b> .
3	B	The streets were wet because it <b>had been raining</b> .
4	C	I was very tired because I <b>had been working</b> all night.
5	F	His hands were dirty because he <b>had been working</b> in the garden.
6	G	She spoke perfect French because she <b>had been living</b> in Paris for 10 years.
7	E	They were very hungry because they <b>had been traveling</b> all day without eating.
8	H	The car broke down because it <b>had been making</b> strange noises for weeks.

**Key Concept: Cause and Visible Result**

The Past Perfect Continuous is often used to explain WHY something was visible or true at a past moment:

- **Visible result:** He was out of breath. (past state)
- **Cause/Activity:** He had been running. (continuous activity before)

**Scoring:** 1 point per correct match. Total: 8 points.

## — MEDIUM EXERCISES —

### 5 Exercise 5: Past Perfect Continuous or Past Perfect Simple? (10 points)

#### Answers

1. **had been waiting** — Focus on duration (continuous)
2. **had read** — Focus on completed quantity (simple)
3. **had been swimming** — Focus on activity causing visible result (continuous)
4. **had finished** — Focus on completion (simple)
5. **had been arguing** — Focus on duration (continuous)
6. **had never seen** — Experience, not process (simple)
7. **had been working** — Continuous activity causing tiredness (continuous)
8. **had already eaten** — Completed action (simple)
9. **had been playing** — Activity causing visible result (continuous)
10. **had been studying** — Prolonged activity (continuous)

#### When to Use Each Tense

##### Past Perfect Continuous:

- Emphasizes **duration/process**: “for hours”, “all day”, “since morning”
- Explains **visible results**: tired, wet, dirty, out of breath

##### Past Perfect Simple:

- Emphasizes **completion**: finished, done, completed
- Focuses on **quantity**: read 3 books, eaten 5 apples
- Used with **stative verbs**: know, believe, want, like (NOT continuous)

**Scoring:** 1 point per correct answer. Total: 10 points.

## 6 Exercise 6: Complete the Story (16 points)

### Answers

- (1) **woke up** — Past Simple (main event)
- (2) **realized** — Past Simple (main event)
- (3) **hadn't set** — Past Perfect Simple (completed action before)
- (4) **was** — Past Simple (state)
- (5) **had been trying** — Past Perfect Continuous (repeated action over time)
- (6) **answered** — Past Simple (main event)
- (7) **had been waiting** — Past Perfect Continuous (duration)
- (8) **had** — Past Simple (scheduled event)
- (9) **arrived** — Past Simple (main event)
- (10) **had already started** — Past Perfect Simple (completed before)
- (11) **was presenting** — Past Continuous (action in progress)
- (12) **had been preparing** — Past Perfect Continuous (duration)
- (13) **felt** — Past Simple (emotion)
- (14) **had been working** — Past Perfect Continuous (duration)
- (15) **got** — Past Simple (main event)
- (16) **went** — Past Simple (main event)

**Scoring:** 1 point per correct answer. Total: 16 points.

## 7 Exercise 7: Multiple Choice (10 points)

### Answers

1. **A) had already escaped** — Completed action (the thief was gone)
2. **B) had been working** — Continuous activity explaining exhaustion
3. **A) had they been discussing** — Duration question
4. **B) had started** — Completed event (NOT *had been starting*)
5. **B) hadn't been sleeping** — Continuous activity causing visible result
6. **C) had been driving** — Duration ("for three hours")
7. **B) had been raining** — Continuous activity causing visible result
8. **B) had been singing** — Prolonged activity before another past event
9. **A) had drunk** — Focus on quantity (five cups)
10. **B) had been thinking** — Continuous process before that moment

### Common Trap

Some verbs are NOT normally used in continuous forms:

- ~~had been starting~~ → **had started**
- ~~had been knowing~~ → **had known**
- ~~had been believing~~ → **had believed**

**Scoring:** 1 point per correct answer. Total: 10 points.

## 8 Exercise 8: Time Expressions (8 points)

### Answers

1. I was exhausted because I had been studying **all night**.
2. When I finally saw her, she told me she had been waiting **for ages**.
3. The baby finally fell asleep. She had been crying **for two hours**.
4. He had been learning Japanese **since January** before he moved to Tokyo.
5. They were starving because they had been hiking **all day** without eating.
6. I couldn't sleep. I had been thinking about the problem **all night**.
7. She looked terrible. She had been feeling ill **for weeks**.
8. He got the job! He had been applying to companies **for ages / since morning**.

### Time Expression Guide

<b>FOR + duration</b>	for ages, for two hours, for weeks
<b>SINCE + starting point</b>	since morning, since January
<b>ALL + time period</b>	all day, all night

**Scoring:** 1 point per correct answer. Total: 8 points.

*Note: Some answers may have acceptable alternatives (e.g., "for ages" or "for weeks" in #8). Accept logical variations.*

**— HARD EXERCISES —****9 Exercise 9: Error Correction (8 points)****Answers**

1. **Error:** “had been work” → missing -ing  
**Correction:** She **had been working** all day, so she was very tired.
2. **Error:** “have been waiting” → wrong auxiliary (should be past)  
**Correction:** They **had been waiting** for three hours when the train finally arrived.
3. **Error:** “had been knowing” → “know” is a stative verb  
**Correction:** I **had known** her for years before we started dating.
4. **Error:** “been wait” → missing -ing  
**Correction:** **Had you been waiting** long when I called?
5. **Error:** “since five years” → “since” needs a point in time, not duration  
**Correction:** He had been living in London **for five years** before he moved.
6. **Error:** “has been raining” → wrong tense (should be past)  
**Correction:** The ground was wet because it **had been raining**.
7. **Error:** “hadn’t been believed” → “believe” is a stative verb  
**Correction:** She **hadn’t believed** in herself until she won the competition.
8. **Error:** “had she been studied” → mixing forms  
**Correction:** How long **had she been studying** before she passed the exam?

**Scoring:** 1 point per correct correction. Total: 8 points.

## 10 Exercise 10: Translation — Portuguese to English (8 points)

### Answers

1. Ele estava cansado porque tinha estado trabalhando a noite toda.  
**He was tired because he had been working all night.**
2. Há quanto tempo você estava esperando quando ela chegou?  
**How long had you been waiting when she arrived?**
3. Eles tinham estado morando em São Paulo por dez anos antes de se mudarem.  
**They had been living in São Paulo for ten years before they moved.**
4. Estava chovendo o dia todo, então as ruas estavam molhadas.  
**It had been raining all day, so the streets were wet.**
5. Ela não tinha estado se sentindo bem ultimamente.  
**She hadn't been feeling well lately.**
6. Nós tínhamos estado estudando por horas quando decidimos fazer uma pausa.  
**We had been studying for hours when we decided to take a break.**
7. Os olhos dele estavam vermelhos porque ele tinha estado chorando.  
**His eyes were red because he had been crying.**
8. Você tinha estado praticando antes da competição?  
**Had you been practicing before the competition?**

**Scoring:** 1 point per correct translation. Total: 8 points.

*Note: Accept minor variations that are grammatically correct.*

## 11 Exercise 11: Complete the Dialogue (13 points)

### Answers

- (1) **applied** — Past Simple (completed action)
- (2) **had been working** — Past Perfect Continuous (duration: “for five years”)
- (3) **did you decide** — Past Simple (question about specific decision)
- (4) **had been thinking** — Past Perfect Continuous (process over time)
- (5) **had been feeling** — Past Perfect Continuous (ongoing state)
- (6) **wasn’t growing / hadn’t been growing** — Past Continuous or Past Perfect Continuous (both acceptable)
- (7) **had you been working** — Past Perfect Continuous (duration question)
- (8) **had been managing / managed** — Past Perfect Continuous or Past Simple (both acceptable)
- (9) **left** — Past Simple (completed action)
- (10) **had been leading** — Past Perfect Continuous (duration: “for two years”)
- (11) **Had you ever worked** — Past Perfect Simple (experience question)
- (12) **had collaborated** — Past Perfect Simple (completed experience)
- (13) **had been handling** — Past Perfect Continuous (duration: “for about three years”)

**Scoring:** 1 point per correct answer. Total: 13 points.

## 12 Exercise 12: Write Your Own Sentences (6 points)

### Sample Answers

1. **She was tired because she had been studying all night.**  
(Or: "He looked exhausted because he had been studying all night.")
2. **How long had you been waiting when the bus arrived?**  
(Or: "How long had they been waiting before she called?")
3. **I had been looking for work for months before I got this job.**  
(Or: "She had been looking for work for months before she found a position.")
4. **He hadn't been listening, so he didn't understand the instructions.**  
(Or: "They hadn't been listening during the meeting.")
5. **The streets were wet because it had been raining all morning.**
6. **She had been practicing the piano for years before she won the competition.**  
(Or: "He had been practicing for years before he became a professional.")

**Scoring:** 1 point per grammatically correct sentence using Past Perfect Continuous appropriately. Total: 6 points.

*Accept any grammatically correct sentence that properly uses the Past Perfect Continuous with the given prompts.*

## Total Score Summary

Exercise	Points	Your Score
<b>EASY SECTION</b>		
1. Form the Past Perfect Continuous	10	_____
2. Make Questions	8	_____
3. Affirmative, Negative, or Question	10	_____
4. Match Cause and Effect	8	_____
<i>Easy Subtotal</i>	<b>36</b>	_____
<b>MEDIUM SECTION</b>		
5. Past Perfect Continuous or Simple?	10	_____
6. Complete the Story	16	_____
7. Multiple Choice	10	_____
8. Time Expressions	8	_____
<i>Medium Subtotal</i>	<b>44</b>	_____
<b>HARD SECTION</b>		
9. Error Correction	8	_____
10. Translation (PT → EN)	8	_____
11. Complete the Dialogue	13	_____
12. Write Your Own Sentences	6	_____
<i>Hard Subtotal</i>	<b>35</b>	_____
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>115</b>	_____

Score Range	Level
104-115 (90%+)	Excellent! Ready for advanced grammar
92-103 (80-89%)	Very Good! Minor review needed
69-91 (60-79%)	Good, but review weak areas
Below 69 (<60%)	More practice recommended

*Great work completing these exercises!*

*Review any mistakes and practice the Past Perfect Continuous in your own writing.*