

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 **hadn't been living** there very long, but she knew the city very well.

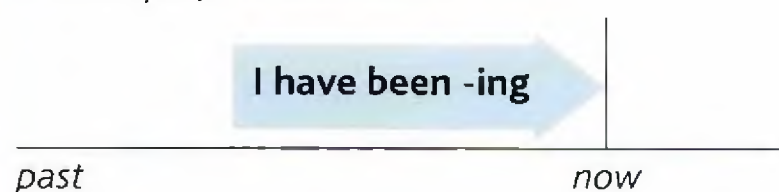
B

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.
- ☐ Paul 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.
- ☐ Katherine **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*)
- ☐ I was surprised when Lisa cut her hair. She'd **had** long hair since I first met her. (*not she'd been having*)

For a list of these verbs, see Unit 4A. For **have**, see Unit 17.