

GRAMMAR

# Past perfect continuous

**LEVEL**

Upper-Intermediate  
(B2)

**NUMBER**

EN\_B2\_2112G

**LANGUAGE**

English



## Learning outcomes

- I can describe recent or not yet completed actions using the present perfect continuous.
- I can describe an action that finished before another took place using the past perfect continuous.





## Warm-up

***I had been dancing all weekend, so I was too tired to start work on Monday.***

**Has this ever happened to you?**



# Review: the present perfect continuous

1. **Read** the sentences.
2. Then **review** the information in the blue boxes below.

He **has been working** very hard recently and that's why he's so tired.

She **has been living** in Thailand for six years (*and is still living there*).

- The **present perfect continuous** is used to describe actions that **recently happened**, or actions that are **not yet completed**.
- The **present perfect continuous** is used with actions that occurred **across time** rather than at a specific point in time.

- We form the present perfect continuous with **has/have + been + -ing** form of the verb.



# Discuss

Answer the questions below.

**How long have you  
been taking classes  
with Lingoda?**



**How long have you  
been living in your  
current town/city?**



# The past perfect continuous

1. **Read** the sentences.
2. Then **review** the information in the blue box below.

She was tired when she got home. She'd been working hard all day.

I had been living in Spain for two years when I got another job.

- We form the ***past perfect continuous*** with **had + been + -ing** form of the verb.
- We form the negative with **had + not + been + -ing** form of the verb.
- **Had** and **not** can be contracted to **hadn't**.

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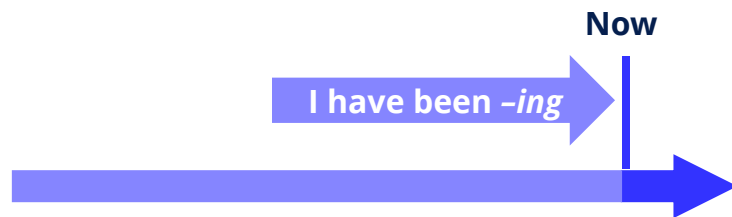
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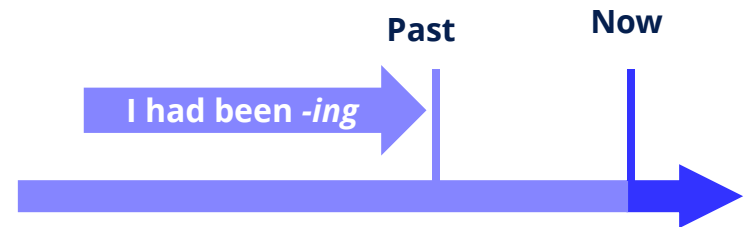


# Compare

Compare **have been -ing** and **had been -ing**.



- I've been waiting for the bus for 20 minutes.
- Shelby is out of breath. She has been running.



- The bus finally came. I'd been waiting for 20 minutes.
- Shelby was out of breath. She had been running.
- Something was happening before something else happened in the past. Is often used with the past simple.



# Complete the sentences

In breakout rooms or together as a class, **complete** the sentences using the ***past perfect continuous***.

- 1 I had been....before I started taking Lingoda classes.
- 2 I hadn't been...before I went on my last holiday.
- 3 I had been...when I got a new job.
- 4 I had been...before I moved to a new place.





# Giving background information

1. **Read** the sentences.
2. Then **review** the information in the blue box below.

She looked really tired because she **had been working** all day.

He didn't feel well because he **had been studying** all night for an exam.

- The **past perfect continuous** is sometimes used to **give background information** that explains **why something is the case**.

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# Practise giving background information

**Complete** the sentences with your own ideas using the **past perfect continuous** tense.

1 Paul was really stressed yesterday because...



*...he had been arguing with a colleague about an important project.*

2 Peter was unbelievably happy at the weekend because...



3 Genevieve was a bit reserved during the meeting because...



4 Mitchell's eyes were all swollen because...



5 Denise was looking really upset at the party because...



6 Julian was unhappy on Friday night because...



# The past perfect continuous with time conjunctions

- The **past perfect continuous** is also often used with time conjunctions, such as **before** and **after**.



**After** I **had been cycling** for three hours, I got a flat tyre.

Ben **had been living** in a boarding house **before** he met Susan.





# Categorise

1. **Read** the sentences. 2. **Categorise** them by the word you think completes them most logically.

1 \_\_\_\_\_ I had been studying, I went on a walk to clear my mind of everything that I'd crammed into my head.

2 I had been single for six years \_\_\_\_\_ I met my husband. We've been together ever since!

3 I had been living in a flat share \_\_\_\_\_ I found my own place.

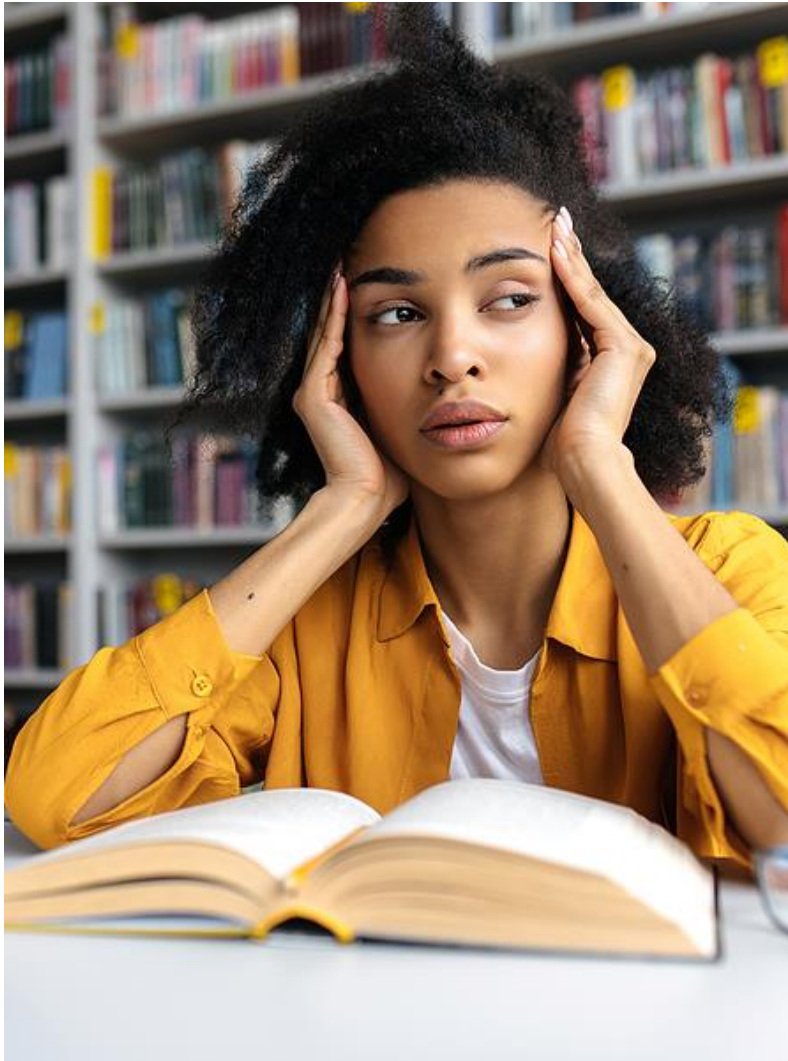
4 I opened all the windows for fresh air \_\_\_\_\_ I had been away for two months.

5 She had been struggling to pay rent \_\_\_\_\_ her book was published, and now she earns millions.

6 \_\_\_\_\_ he had been running around all day, he went home and relaxed on the sofa.

**before**

**after**



I've been **running around** all morning.  
I'm exhausted!

If you've been **running around**, you've been very busy doing a lot of different things.

How often do you feel that you're **running around**?



# Discuss

**Answer** the questions below.



What had you been doing before class started?

Think of a time you were interrupted. What had you been doing before the interruption?

Think of a time you received good news. What had you been doing when you received the news?

Think of a time someone surprised you and made you happy. What had you been doing before this? How did they surprise you?





# End of the lesson

Idiom

***cash cow***

**Meaning:** a business, investment, or product that generates a constant flow of income

**Example:** This product is still our company's cash cow!



# Additional practice

# Complete the text with the correct verb form

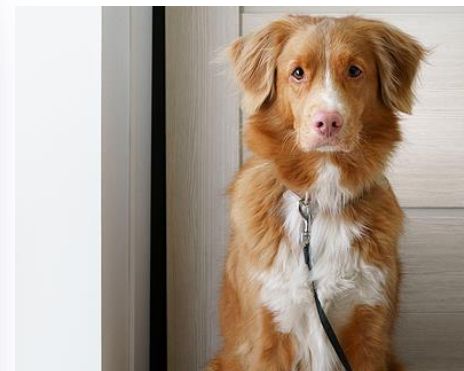
Use the **present perfect continuous**, **past perfect continuous**, or **past simple**.

Mango \_\_\_\_\_ (sit) inside all day and was ready for a walk. He was an energetic dog and loved going to the park each day. Mango and his owner \_\_\_\_\_ (run) around in the park for two hours when Mango \_\_\_\_\_ (see) a bird far off in the distance. Mango couldn't resist. When his owner wasn't looking, he sprinted off into the distance. He \_\_\_\_\_ (run) for a couple of minutes when he \_\_\_\_\_ (smell) something delicious, so he changed his mind and turned down a nearby street. Mango's owner \_\_\_\_\_ (think) about heading home, before Mango ran off. She called out his name, but Mango was far gone. After a couple of hours of running around the park looking for Mango, his owner \_\_\_\_\_ (go) home.

'Where's Mango?' asked her husband as she walked in the door.

'He ran away. I \_\_\_\_\_ (look) for him for two hours. What should we do?'

Just then, they heard Mango barking outside the door!





# Complete the sentences

**Complete** the sentences with your own ideas.

**After I had been...**

**Before I had been...**

**I had been living in  
\_\_\_\_\_ when...**

**I had been working all  
day when...**



# Practise giving background information

**Complete** the sentences using the ***past perfect continuous*** tense.

1 Shelly was really sad yesterday because...



*...she had been fighting with her best friend.*

2 Nicola was incredibly hungry because...



3 Theodore was very nervous before the meeting because...



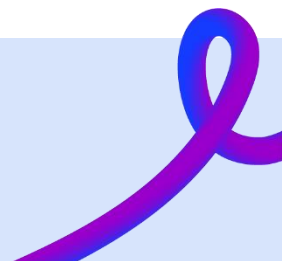
4 Theodora's hands were shaking because...



5 Ben was jumping up and down with joy because...



6 Stevie was all alone on Saturday because...







# Answer key

**P.12:**

*before:* 2, 3, 5

*after:* 1, 4, 6

**P.18:** had been sitting; had been running; saw; had been running; smelt; had been thinking; went; looked



# Summary

## Reviewing the present perfect continuous

- Used to describe actions that **recently happened** or are **not yet completed**. It is used with actions that occurred **across time** rather than at a specific time.
- We form the present perfect continuous with **has/have + been + -ing form** of the verb.
- *He has been working very hard recently and that's why he's so tired.*

## The past perfect continuous

- We form the past perfect continuous with **had + been + -ing form** of the verb. We form the negative with **had + not + been + -ing form** of the verb. *Had* and *not* can be contracted to **hadn't**.
- Used to talk about an action that was happening before something else happened in the past.
- Compare: *She is out of breath. She **has been running**.* - *She was out of breath. She **had been running**.*

## Using the past perfect continuous

- The **past perfect continuous** is sometimes used to **give background information** that explains **why something is the case**.
- *She looked really tired because she **had been working** all day.*

## Past perfect continuous and time conjunctions

- The **past perfect continuous** is also often used with time conjunctions, such as **before** and **after**.
- ***After** I **had been cycling** for three hours, I got a flat tyre.*
- *Ben **had been living** in a boarding house **before** he met Susan.*



# Vocabulary

unbelievably

reserved

swollen

tyre

to run around

