

Past Perfect Continuous

Past Perfect Continuous - Introduction

Past perfect continuous corresponds to the present perfect continuous, but refers to a time in the past.

Past perfect continuous is also known as the past perfect progressive.

The process is more important than the results.

Past Perfect Continuous - Usage

Past perfect continuous is used for

- something that started in the past and continued up to another time in the past
- something that finished just before another time in the past
- reported speech

Past Perfect Continuous - Formation

Positive:

subject + had been + verb+ing

I had been eating ice-cream.

Negative:

subject + hadn't been + verb+ing

We hadn't been eating ice-cream.

Question:

had + subject + been + verb+ing

Had she been eating ice-cream?

Negative question:

hadn't + subject + been + verb+ing

Hadn't he been eating ice-cream?

Past Perfect Continuous – Examples

something that started in the past and continued up to another time in the past

- He had been having a lunchtime sleep when his boss walked in.
- I had been working as a software developer before switching to sales.

something that finished just before another time in the past (for effects)

- It had been snowing and the roads were slippery.
- I hadn't been sleeping very well – that is why I was so tired.

reported speech

- “I have been working all weekend” – she said she had been working all weekend.
- “We have been talking for over an hour” – they said they had been talking for over an hour.