



GRAMMAR

Present vs Past Perfect Tense Guide

Clear rules, side-by-side comparisons, exercises with answer key

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Present Perfect vs. Past Perfect

Comprehensive grammar guide, quiz and practice exercises.

1. Grammatical Framework and Usage

	Present Perfect	Past Perfect
Feature	Present Perfect	Past Perfect
Formation	Subject + have/has + Past Participle (V3)	Subject + had + Past Participle (V3)
Usage	Connects past events to the present moment	Refers to an action that happened before another past action
Time Focus	Unfinished time, life experiences, present results	The "earlier past"

Signal Words

Present Perfect	Past Perfect
already	before
yet	after
just	by the time
since	already (past)
for	until then
ever/never	after
recently	so far
recently	after

Examples

- Present Perfect: "She has lived in London for five years." (She still lives there now.)
- Past Perfect: "She had lived in London for five years before she moved to Paris."

2. Quick Comparison Matrix

	Present Perfect	Past Perfect
Aspect	Present Perfect	Past Perfect
Time Focus	Past action connected to present	Earlier past completed before later past
Auxiliary Verb	have / has	had (all subjects)

Key Indicator	Action result affects current state	Sequence of two distinct past events
Sample	"I have lost my key." (I cannot open the door now)	"I had lost my key." (So I could not enter yesterday)

Practice: Part A

Complete each sentence with Present Perfect or Past Perfect.

- 1 I cannot lock the door because I _____ (lose) my keys.
- 2 By the time the fire brigade arrived, the neighbours _____ (already / put) out the fire.
- 3 She _____ (never / see) a glacier before her trip to Iceland last month.
- 4 We are happy to inform you that you _____ (pass) the entrance examination.
- 5 He was nervous during the flight because he _____ (not / fly) in an airplane before.
- 6 They _____ (finish) their project, so they can enjoy their weekend now.
- 7 When Sarah met Arthur, he _____ (already / work) at the university for ten years.
- 8 I _____ (know) Marcus since we were in primary school.
- 9 The train _____ (leave) by the time we reached the station platform.
- 10 How many pages of the document _____ (you / read) so far?

PRACTICE

Part B -- Multiple Choice

Choose the sentence with the correct verb tense.

- 1 By the time we arrived at the cinema, the film _____.
 A has already started B had already started C started already
- 2 I _____ this book twice; it is my favorite.
 A have read B had read C read
- 3 She was exhausted because she _____ all night before the exam.
 A has studied B had studied C studies
- 4 _____ you ever _____ sushi before?
 A Have / eaten B Had / eaten C Did / eat
- 5 We _____ the report before the manager asked for it.
 A have finished B had finished C finish
- 6 He _____ his car, so he cannot drive to work today.
 A has sold B had sold C sold
- 7 When I called her, she _____ already _____ the house.
 A has / left B had / left C leaves



- 8 They _____ in this city since 2015.
A have lived **B** had lived **C** lived
- 9 The plane _____ by the time we got to the gate.
A has departed **B** had departed **C** departs
10. I am so proud -- I _____ my degree at last!
A have finally earned **B** had finally earned **C** finally earn

ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATIONS

Part A:

- 1 have lost -- Completed action with present consequence (keys are currently missing).
- 2 had already put -- The fire was put out before the fire brigade arrived (earlier past action).
- 3 had never seen -- Refers to a state before a past reference point (the trip last month).
- 4 have passed -- Recent news with direct present relevance.
- 5 had not flown -- Lack of experience prior to that specific past flight.
- 6 have finished -- Action completed, with present result (they can relax now).
- 7 had already worked -- Action ongoing up to a specific past moment (meeting Sarah).
- 8 have known -- State starting in the past and continuing into the present.
- 9 had left -- Train departure happened prior to arriving at the platform.
- 10 have you read -- Asking about progress up to the present moment ("so far").

Part B:

- 1 B) had already started 2. A) have read 3. B) had studied 4. A) Have / eaten
- 5 B) had finished 6. A) has sold 7. B) had / left 8. A) have lived
- 9 B) had departed 10. A) have finally earned