

14th January

OET Writing – Past Perfect Simple and Past Perfect Continuous

Starter

What's the difference between these two sentences?

1. When I arrived at her home, Mrs Anand had done exercise. – **past perfect simple** – one action started and finished before another past action – focus on completed action
2. When I arrived at her home, Mrs Anand had been doing exercise. – **past perfect continuous** – one action started before another past action and was still happening or the first action had just finished before the second action – focus more on the duration of action or that fact that it had just finished before the second action

Past Perfect Simple = subject + had (not) + verb 3 (past participle)

Past Perfect Continuous = subject + had (not) + been + verb + ing

Which of these sentences is correct?

Why?

1. Mr Grunewald **had had** hypertension for five years before the operation.
2. Mr Grunewald ~~had been having~~ hypertension for five years before the operation.

Past Perfect Simple	Past Perfect Continuous
<p>Focus on the completion and/or result of a past action before another past action</p> <p>“Mr Green had taken his medication that morning”</p>	<p>Focus on the fact that a past action had recently finished before another past action or may still have been happening</p> <p>“Mr Green had been taking his medication every morning that week”</p>
<p>We can use with action and non-action verbs to talk about an action/state that started in the past and continued to another point in the past (with ‘for’ and ‘since’)</p> <p>“In 2023, Ms Demir had taken the medication for 5 years”</p> <p>“The doctor had known Ms Demir since 2003”</p>	<p>We can only use with action verbs to talk about an action that started in the past and continued to another point in the past (with ‘for’ and ‘since’)</p> <p>“Ms Demir had been attending the clinic for six months”</p> <p>“The doctor had been knowing Ms Demir since 2003”</p>
<p>We focus on ‘how many/much’</p> <p>“The doctor had seen 10 patients that day”</p> <p>“Mr Hewitt had drunk five glasses of water”</p>	<p>We focus on ‘how long’</p> <p>“His partner had been waiting for three hours”</p>
<p>We often use with ‘already’, ‘just’, ‘ever’, ‘never’ and ‘yet’</p> <p>“The physiotherapist had already visited the patient”</p> <p>“We had just opened a new clinic in town”</p> <p>“I had never taken any medication”</p>	<p>We often use with phrases such as ‘all day’ or ‘all morning’</p> <p>“We had been working all morning”</p> <p>“The staff had been doing training all day”</p>
<p>We can use with the passive</p> <p>“A lot of examinations had been conducted”</p>	<p>We don’t usually use with the passive</p> <p>“A lot of examinations had been being conducted”</p>

Practice:

Put the verb in brackets into the most suitable tense - Past Perfect Simple or Past Perfect Continuous

1. I was really fed up because we **had been queuing** for hours. (queue)
2. She went to the police to report that someone **had stolen** her bag. / ...her bag **had been stolen**. (steal)
3. It **had been raining** all morning. The streets were wet, and there were puddles everywhere. (rain)
4. She got to work late because she **had left** her phone at home and **(had) had to** go back and get it. (leave, have to)
5. I almost didn't recognize Tony at the party. He **had changed** a lot since I last saw him. (change)
6. The tourists' faces were very red. They **had been sitting** in the sun all morning and they **had not put on** any sun cream. (sit, not put on)
7. I could see from their expressions that my parents **had been arguing**. (argue)
8. Jess had a bandage on her arm because she **had fallen** off her bike that morning. (fall)
9. I was amazed because I **had never seen** such an enormous plane before. (never see)
10. How long **had you been walking** before you realized that you were lost? (walk)

Extension:

How could we tell the story of this appointment in Mr Collister's medical history?

04/02/18 Pt feels tired, 'run-down'; sore eyes, dizzy sometimes (for last 3-4 weeks) –
?orthostatic hypotension.
Overweight, unfit – no adjustment to lifestyle, diet, exercise.
Reports busy at work.

We could say...

Mr Collister **presented** to the clinic on 4th February 2018. He **was feeling** tired and run down and **had** sore eyes. He **had been experiencing** dizziness for the previous 3-4 weeks. He **was** overweight and **had made** no changes to his lifestyle, diet or exercise regime.