

15<sup>th</sup> April 2025

## 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.
2. When I arrived at her home, Mrs Anand had been doing exercise.



**Past Perfect Simple** = had + verb three (past participle) – we use it to talk about an action that happened (usually started and finished) before another past action

**Past Perfect Continuous** = had + been + verb + ing – we use it to talk about two situations: 1. An action which started and finished recently before another past action or 2. An action which started before another past action and was still happening when the second past action occurred

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.~~

In this situation, 'have' is a non-action verb and it cannot be used in continuous tenses

Past Perfect Simple	Past Perfect Continuous
<p><b>Focus on the completion and/or result of a past action before another past action</b></p> <p>“Mr Green had taken his medication that morning”</p>	<p><b>Focus on the fact that a past action had recently finished before another past action or may still have been happening</b></p> <p>“Mr Green had been taking his medication every morning that week”</p>
<p><b>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’)</b></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><b>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’)</b></p> <p>“Ms Demir had been attending the clinic for six months”</p> <p><del>“The doctor had been knowing Ms Demir since 2003”</del></p>
<p><b>We focus on ‘how many/much’</b></p> <p>“The doctor had seen 10 patients that day”</p> <p>“Mr Hewitt had drunk five glasses of water”</p>	<p><b>We focus on ‘how long’</b></p> <p>“His partner had been waiting for three hours”</p>
<p><b>We often use with ‘already’, ‘just’, ‘ever’, ‘never’ and ‘yet’</b></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><b>We often use with phrases such as ‘all day’ or ‘all morning’</b></p> <p>“We had been working all morning”</p> <p>“The staff had been doing training all day”</p>
<p><b>We can use with the passive</b></p> <p>“A lot of examinations had been conducted”</p>	<p><b>We don’t usually use with the passive</b></p> <p><del>“A lot of examinations had been being conducted”</del></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 4<sup>th</sup> 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.