

# Unit 3

## The past perfect & past perfect continuous tenses



### Grammar in Context

Theme: Changes brought by technology

Words by Theme



Read the following encyclopaedia entry and answer the questions.

### The History and Evolution<sup>1</sup> of Money

#### Background

① Before the invention of money, people **had been conducting** business through bartering<sup>2</sup>. For example, a blacksmith<sup>3</sup> may offer a knife in return for a farmer's food.

#### Development

② People realised the need for a new form of trading after they **had gone through** many negotiations<sup>4</sup> when bartering. ③ By 1100 BC, people in China **had started** using miniature<sup>5</sup> bronze replicas of the targeted goods.

④ The Chinese **had developed** the first known banknotes before the Tang dynasty.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the US **had been undergoing** a coin shortage for months as fewer people were making cash transactions<sup>6</sup>.

#### Recent situation

⑤ Electronic payment services **had been transforming** trading before mobile wallets came into play. ⑥ By 2020, mobile wallets **had become** the second most prevailing payment option in Hong Kong.

Read sentences ① – ⑥. Which of the two actions was completed first? Put a tick (✓) in the boxes.

①	inventing money	✓	conducting business through bartering
②	going through many negotiations		realising a new form of trading needed
③	reaching 1100 BC		starting to use miniature bronze replicas
④	the Tang dynasty began		developing first known banknotes
⑤	electronic payment evolving		mobile wallets coming into play
⑥	reaching 2020		mobile wallets becoming prevailing



## PART 1 The past perfect tense

We use the past perfect tense to talk about:

Situations		Examples	
A past action that ended	before another action	<p><i>When Fiona arrived at the cinema, the movie had already begun.</i></p> <p><i>The engineer had fixed the engine before he left work.</i></p>	
	before a specific time	<p><i>Had the world population exceeded 8 billion by 2021?</i></p> <p><i>Ivan had not travelled abroad by his tenth birthday.</i></p>	

We form the past perfect tense with *had* + past participle of the verb. Most past participles end in *-ed*.

### Reminder

With *before* or *after*, we can use either the simple past tense or the past perfect tense to refer to a sequence of events.

- Bob ate **before** he went to school. = Bob **had eaten before** he went to school.
- They continued the trip **after** they rested. = They continued the trip **after they had rested**.

However, with *when*, different tenses result in different meanings.

- Dinner started **when** I came home. (Dinner started at the same time as I came home.)
- Dinner **had started when** I came home. (Dinner started and then I came home.)

### Let's compare

Past perfect tense	Simple past tense
<p><b>The earlier of the two past actions</b></p> <p><i>Tom had graduated when Mr Lee retired.</i> (Tom graduated before Mr Lee retired. The exact time of his graduation is unimportant.)</p>	<p><b>A single past action</b></p> <p><i>Tom graduated from college in 2016.</i> (The time of Tom's graduation is clearly stated.)</p>

### Exercise 1.1

Match the two parts to make sentences with the help of the given words. Use the simple past or past perfect tense.

1. Roy—score—fifteen points
2. the new phone model—be—sold out
3. Adam—have a stomachache
4. Mike—lose—his footing
5. Walter—refrigerate—the cookie dough
6. Kevin—not return home
7. I—enter—the finals
8. I—explain—myself

+

- the teacher—decide to forgive—me
- he—get off—the plane
- halftime—of the basketball match
- he—bake—it
- Tim—decide to buy—one
- midnight
- he—drink—a bottle of expired milk
- I—go through—many rounds of games

The past perfect & past perfect continuous tenses

1. Roy had scored fifteen points by halftime of the basketball match. \_\_\_\_\_ (... by ...)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ (... when ...)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ (... after ...)
4. \_\_\_\_\_ (... when ...)
5. \_\_\_\_\_ (... before ...)
6. \_\_\_\_\_ (... by ...)
7. \_\_\_\_\_ (Before ...)
8. \_\_\_\_\_ (After ...)



### Exercise 1.2

Nick is leaving a note to his mum. Complete the note by putting *before*, *after*, *when*, or *by* in the boxes. Use each word ONCE only. Fill in the blanks using the simple past or past perfect tense.

Mum,

When you (1) \_\_\_\_\_ got \_\_\_\_\_ (get) home from work, I (2) \_\_\_\_\_ (have) an amazing birthday party. I considered not inviting Timothy to the party (3) \_\_\_\_\_ we (4) \_\_\_\_\_ (have) a stupid quarrel. But I eventually did and he (5) \_\_\_\_\_ (come). We both (6) \_\_\_\_\_ (forget) the fight by that time.

We played card games and video games (7) \_\_\_\_\_ we finished eating. (8) \_\_\_\_\_ Dad (9) \_\_\_\_\_ (complain) about how late it was getting, I (10) \_\_\_\_\_ (remind) my buddies we needed to end the party by 8 pm. (11) \_\_\_\_\_ the end of the party, Dad (12) \_\_\_\_\_ (interrupt) us five times!

Nick

## PART 2 More on the past perfect tense

We use the past perfect tense to report what people said, asked or thought.

#### Direct Speech

The pilot said, 'There has been a delay.'

The trainer asked, 'Were you tired?'

Tim thought, 'I had drunk too much coffee before the exam.'



#### Reported Speech

The pilot said that there *had been* a delay.

The trainer asked if I *had been* tired.

Tim thought that he *had drunk* too much coffee before the exam.

We use the past perfect tense with *if only* or *wish* to show regrets.

- My primary school *did not have* a swimming pool. **If only** it *had had* one!
- Leo regrets his harsh words. He **wishes** that he *had not said* that.

### Reminder!

In addition to *before, after, when* and *by*, we often use *just, already, never, ever, yet* and *by the time* with the past perfect tense.

I *had just fallen* asleep when he *called*. (one action happening immediately before the other)

*Had the coupon already expired by the time* he *remembered* it? (earlier than expected)

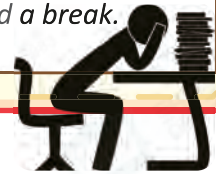
I *had never tried* such good pastry until I *tasted* the cream puffs of this bakery. (experience)

Reading *was* the best habit I *had ever had*. (until something better came up later)

I *had not told* him anything *yet* when he *joined* us. (until a time in the past)

### Let's compare

Past perfect tense	Present perfect tense
<p><b>Two actions started and finished in the past</b> I <i>had been</i> busy for a year when I <i>took</i> a long holiday. (I was busy and then I took a holiday.)</p>	<p><b>An action started in the past but still continues up to now, or has a present effect</b> I <i>have been</i> busy for a year. I <i>need</i> a break. (I am still busy now.)</p>



### Exercise 2.1

Change the direct speech into reported speech.

The police said, 'We have arrested a man.'

The police said that they (1) \_\_\_\_\_ had arrested \_\_\_\_\_ a man.

Jim asked, 'Why were you late?'

Jim asked me why I (2) \_\_\_\_\_ late.

Ann claimed, 'I hadn't harmed anyone.'

Ann claimed that she (3) \_\_\_\_\_ anyone.

Joe said, 'I've gone through a tough time.'

Joe said that he (4) \_\_\_\_\_ a tough time.

She grumbled, 'You haven't listened.'

She grumbled that I (5) \_\_\_\_\_.



### Exercise 2.2

Make sentences with the help of the given words.

if only / somebody / help / him / seek / the answer

if only / it / have / longer / opening hours

I wish / the ambulance / come / to the scene / earlier

I wish / the museum / preserve / them / well

1. The historical artefacts were damaged.

I wish the museum had preserved them well.

2. The museum was closed when I got there.

3. Two people were killed in the car accident.

4. Kyle gave up finding the truth.



### Exercise 2.3

Candice is drafting a complaint letter. Correct the underlined mistakes and insert the missing words.

Dear Restaurant Manager,

I had (1) ^ had such a horrible dining experience in the city. (2) After I even looked at the menu, a waiter (3) has urged me to order. Then, he left when I had not (4) already finished ordering. He was the rudest waiter I had (5) ^ met. More than 50 minutes (6) passed when I asked him to check my order. (7) At the time he got back to me, I had (8) ^ wanted to leave. I had (9) ^ got so angry before. I wish I (10) have gone to your restaurant.

Yours faithfully,  
Candice Lau

1. never
2. Before
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

## PART 3 The past perfect continuous tense

We form the past perfect continuous tense with **had + been + present participle of the verb**.

Situations		Examples	
A past action that continued up to another past action	over a period of time	Pat <b>had been rehearsing</b> for two weeks when the teacher <b>cancelled</b> the show.	
	repeatedly over a period of time	Eva <b>had been volunteering</b> for a year before someone <b>took over</b> from her.	
To report what people said, asked or thought		<p>Joe said, 'I have not been eating properly the whole month.'</p> <p>→ Joe said that he <b>had not been eating</b> properly the whole month.</p> <p>Anne asked, 'Had you been working when I called you?'</p> <p>→ Anne asked if I <b>had been working</b> when she called me.</p>	

### Let's compare

Past perfect continuous tense	Past perfect tense
<p><b>Focuses on the continuation of an action</b> The passengers <b>had been boarding</b> when the pilot made the announcement. (Boarding was in progress when the announcement was made.)</p>	<p><b>Focuses on the completion of an action</b> The passengers <b>had boarded</b> when the pilot made the announcement. (Boarding had ended when the announcement was made.)</p>
<p><b>Only used with action verbs</b> The passengers were annoyed because the baby <b>had been crying</b> for hours on the flight.</p>	<p><b>Can be used with non-action verbs like agree, arrive, hear, know, see and want</b> The flight <b>had arrived</b> when the storm came.</p>



## Grammar Wrap-up

Theo runs a sculpting studio and Rex has a photography studio. Rex is reading his chat history with Theo. Complete the messages using the correct form of the given verbs.



Theo

Last seen today 19:25



I felt that advances in technology **(1)** had disadvantaged (disadvantage) my sculpting studio. After 3D printing **(2)** \_\_\_\_\_ (become) popular, I **(3)** \_\_\_\_\_ (lose) half of my regular customers. Luckily, I'm able to stay afloat now.



As a photographer, I encountered similar problems when smartphones **(4)** \_\_\_\_\_ (revolutionise) photography. I thought they **(5)** \_\_\_\_\_ (end) my career, but I was wrong.



True. Business **(6)** \_\_\_\_\_ (pick up) since the beginning of this year. I now have more customers than before. If only I **(7)** \_\_\_\_\_ (see) the challenges as opportunities earlier. **(8)** \_\_\_\_\_ (you / ever / feel) the same way?

I **(9)** \_\_\_\_\_ (have) similar thoughts at first. However, I asked myself whether I **(10)** \_\_\_\_\_ (develop) my very own artistic style as no machines can tell me how to shoot stylistically. This also applies to sculpting, right? After I launched a new line of services, my orders **(11)** \_\_\_\_\_ (grow) double. It's such a relief!

I **(12)** \_\_\_\_\_ (apprentice) to a great sculptor before I made my way in the industry. She **(13)** \_\_\_\_\_ (teach) me tips and techniques for years. Sadly, we **(14)** \_\_\_\_\_ (not contact) each other for a long time. Guess what? I'll call her tonight!



### More to take away

afloat (adj.) = having enough money to pay what you owe  
pick up (phr. v.) = to become better

# Grammar in Pre-DSE Text Type

Theme: Changes brought by technology

You are writing a book review. Complete the review by filling in the blanks using the correct form of the given verbs.

unfold    regard    transform    emerge    not finish    write    offer  
be    already / multiply    just / start    give    reflect on    use

Words by Theme



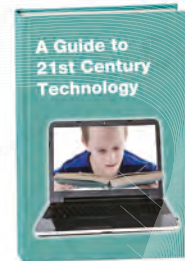
2 December 20XX

## Hong Kong Review of Books

### Updated<sup>1</sup> Lessons for the Digital Age

Tiffany Suen

*A Guide to 21st Century Technology*  
By Frankie Lee  
HKU Press, 349 pp., \$209, November 20XX



Frankie Lee was a child prodigy. When he (1) \_\_\_\_\_ wrote \_\_\_\_\_ his first book, *Studies on Technological Trends*, he (2) \_\_\_\_\_ his degree in information science<sup>2</sup>. Many people (3) \_\_\_\_\_ this book as the bible on the subject before those trends became outdated<sup>3</sup>. In an interview last year, Lee said he (4) \_\_\_\_\_ whether his points were still valid for quite some time.

In *A Guide to 21st Century Technology*, he revisits his arguments. The first chapter tells a story that (5) \_\_\_\_\_ by the mid-20th century. By that time, letters (6) \_\_\_\_\_ the major form of communication. Telegraphy<sup>4</sup> was invented only in the previous century, when people mainly (7) \_\_\_\_\_ it for long-distance communication or in the military.

The rest of the book fast-forwards<sup>5</sup> to the 21st century. By the 1990s, the internet revolution<sup>6</sup> (8) \_\_\_\_\_ many areas in life, such as business and interpersonal relationships. The world (9) \_\_\_\_\_ to enjoy the convenience of the World Wide Web<sup>7</sup> when desktop computers (10) \_\_\_\_\_. The Web (11) \_\_\_\_\_ our modes of communication—e-mail, video conference and so on—for a decade before portable devices like smartphones did. Combined with the latest innovations<sup>8</sup>, smartphones (12) \_\_\_\_\_ us a new communication experience ever since.

The author also wishes tech entrepreneurs (13) \_\_\_\_\_ more thought to the influence of their inventions on human behaviour. All these make this book engaging as well as informative.



#### More to take away

prodigy (n.) = a young person who has a great ability in something  
bible (n.) = a book that gives important information about a subject

The past perfect tense expresses an action that ended before another action in the past. The past perfect continuous tense shows an action that continued up to another action in the past.

- The lovers **had agreed** to remain friends when they **broke up**. (past perfect tense)
- The couple **had been arguing** for years before they **separated**. (past perfect continuous tense)

## Version 1

Noah is writing a magazine article about ghosting. Read the article. There is ONE mistake in each underlined part.



## MEMORIES OF BEING GHOSTED

When someone you love ghosts you, they cut off contact after you go to great lengths to connect with them. The ignored texts can hurt you badly. (1) We have been receiving letters about ghosting from our readers for quite some time before we worked on the current issue. (2) We had printed one of the stories here so that we can all think about how to deal with ghosting.

'I met him on an online dating application. It seemed that we were made for each other—we finished each other's sentences and shared many hobbies. By our third date, (3) we have already thought about our future together. Nobody else had ever shown me so much tenderness and affection. We had been dating for months, but (4) I had never been meeting his friends or family. One day, he suddenly stopped responding to my messages. I was worried about his safety. I remember thinking: (5) "Had he had an accident?"

(6) I had tried to forget these unhappy memories for an



entire year when he became my new colleague. He acted like (7) nothing happens between us. He pretended that (8) we did not meet before.

I was not trying to get back together with him. I just wanted him to acknowledge that (9) I have suffered because of him. I wish (10) he sent me a break-up message. (11) He was evading me for a long time when he was finally transferred to an overseas branch of our company. (12) We never speak to each other since then. (13) I have stalked him on social media since he left. I keep trying to find out (14) how life treated him. Clearly, I cannot get over him. What should I do?'

## Version 2

Correct the underlined parts in Version 1.



## MEMORIES OF BEING GHOSTED

When someone you love ghosts you, they cut off contact after you go to great lengths to connect with them. The ignored texts can hurt you badly. (1) We had been receiving letters about ghosting from our readers for quite some time before we worked on the current issue. (2) \_\_\_\_\_ so that we can all think about how to deal with ghosting.

'I met him on an online dating application. It seemed that we were made for each other—we finished each other's sentences and shared many hobbies. By our third date, (3) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_. Nobody else had ever shown me so much tenderness and affection. We had been dating for months, but (4) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_. One day, he suddenly stopped responding to my messages. I was worried about his safety. I remember thinking:

(5) " \_\_\_\_\_ "

(6) \_\_\_\_\_

when he became my new colleague. He acted

like (7) \_\_\_\_\_.

He pretended that (8) \_\_\_\_\_.

I was not trying to get back together with him. I just wanted him to acknowledge that (9) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_. I wish (10) \_\_\_\_\_.

(11) \_\_\_\_\_

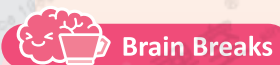
\_\_\_\_\_ when he was finally transferred to an overseas branch of our company. (12) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(13) \_\_\_\_\_ since he left.

I keep trying to find out (14) \_\_\_\_\_.

Clearly, I cannot get over him. What should I do?'



Brain Breaks

