

Lecture 3: The Past Tense

1- Past Simple :

Formation: Most verbs add-ed-to the base form to make the past simple tense. The past s' tense form is the same for all persons (except with the verb be).

Watch/ I, you, it, he, she, we, they watched.

Exceptions:

Base forms ending in a single stressed vowel and a consonant (except w , x or y) double the consonant hug/hugged.

Base forms ending in a consonant and y change y to I.

Eg: copy=copied.

*Irregular verbs do not form the past tense with-ed-Eg: **go=went**.*

Use:

1- Action completed in the past and states in the past.

*Eg: My friends **went** to Paris a week ago.*

2- For actions that happened at the same time and also for repeated actions:

*Eg: When we got to the junction, I **took** the left turn while Micky took to right (2 actions at the same time).*

*My brother **applied** for a visa six times before he got one (repeated action).*

3- Series of completed actions in the past (narration).

*First, I **got up**, then I **had** breakfast.*

4- Together with the past progressive/continuous the simple past interrupted on action, which was in progress in the past.

Eg: I was eating when my cat **jumped** onto my lap!!

2- Past continuous:

Formation:

I, he, she it + was + stem + ing

Eg: I **was doing** my homework

They, you, we + were + stem +ing

Eg: They **were listening** to the lecture.

Use:

1 -We often use the past continuous to show that a past action was temporary, or was changing or developing.

Eg: At the time of our arrival, the city **was going** through a period of rapid expansion.

2- It describes an action in progress at a point of time in the past, i.e. the action began before this point and continued after.

Eg: His symptoms **were becoming** more pronounced each day (changing).

- During my training, I **was earning** a lot less than my wife (temporary).
- We **were watching** the sky and listening for the first sounds of the down chorus.

3- We use past continuous to contrast an ongoing action with a single event which interrupts it. We use the past simple for the single event.

Eg: Seventy cars **were crossing** the bridge, when pier **collapsed** into the river.

- They **were playing** cards when the telephone **rang**.

1st action → past progressive.

2nd action → Simple Past.

3 – Past Perfect

The past perfect tense indicates that an action was completed (finished or perfected) at some point in the past before something else happened.

Formation:

This tense is formed with the past tense form of "to have" (had) plus the past participle of the verb (which can be either regular or irregular in form).

Use:

1- Talking about some point in the past and want to reference an event that happened even earlier, using the past perfect allows you to convey the sequence of the events. It's also clearer and more specific. Most often the reason to write a verb in the perfect tense is to show that it happened before actions in the same sentence that are described by verbs in the simple past tense.

*Eg: - I **had walked** two miles by lunchtime.*

- I **had run** three other marathons before entering the Boston Marathon.*
- She **had swum** the English Channel every summer until 1997.*

2 - Another time to use p.p is when you are expressing a condition and a result the past perfect is used in the part of the sentence that explains the condition (the if-clause).

*Eg: If I **had met** Susan last week, I would have given her the book.*

Infinitive

Past perfect

Negative

Work

Had worked

Had not worked

Interrogative: Had he worked?

4- Past perfect continuous:

The past perfect continuous (also called past perfect progressive) is a verb tense which is used to show that an action started in the past and continued up to another point in past.

Formation:

The past perfect continuous is formed using **had+been+present participle**.

Statement: You **had been waiting** there more than two hours, when she finally arrived.

Question: Had you been waiting?

Negative: You had not been waiting.

Use:

1- We use the past perfect continuous to show that something started in the past continued up until another time in the past. However, the duration does not continue until now, it stops before something else in the past.

Eg: - They **had been talking** for over an hour Before tony arrived.

- She **had been working** at the company for three years when it went out of business.

2- Using the past perfect continuous before another action in the past is a good way to show **cause and effect** (the effect is obvious at the time of speaking).

Eg: - Jason was tired because he **had been jogging**. (you could see he was tired).

- Sam gained weight because he **had been overeating**.