

Past perfect

The past perfect is used in the same way as the present perfect, but it refers to a time in the past, not the present. We use the past perfect:

for something that **started in the past** and **continued up to a given time in the past**:

When George died, he and Anne **had been married** for nearly fifty years.

She didn't want to move. She **had lived** in Liverpool all her life.

For this use, we **often** use the past perfect **continuous**:

She didn't want to move. She **had been living** in Liverpool all her life.

Everything was wet. It **had been raining** for hours.

for something that **happened several times before** a point in the **past** and **continued after** that point:

He was a wonderful guitarist. He **had been playing** ever since he was a teenager.

He **had written** three books and he **was working** on another one.

when we are **reporting** our experience **up to a point** in the **past**:

My eighteenth birthday **was** the worst day I **had ever had**.

I **was** pleased to meet George. I **hadn't met** him before, even though I **had met** his wife several times.

for something that **happened** in the **past** and is **important** at a **later time** in the past:

I **couldn't** get into the house. I **had lost** my keys.

Teresa **wasn't** at home. She **had gone** shopping.

We often use expressions with **for** and **since** with the past perfect:

I was sorry when the factory **closed**. I **had worked** there for ten years.

I **had been watching** that programme every week since it started, but I **missed** the last episode.

We do not normally use the past perfect continuous with stative verbs. We use the past perfect simple instead:

Up until that moment, I'd never believed (NOT been believing) in astrology.