

## A2 TEENS · GRAMMAR · LESSON 08

## By the time I *arrived*, *everyone had left*.

Sometimes one past action happens **before** another past action. That *earlier* past needs a special tense: the **Past Perfect**.

⌚ 45 min · ✓ CEFR A2 · ♦ Past Perfect · ♦ had + V3

I

## WARM-UP

### Too late...

#### Have you ever been just too late?

Before we start, think about these situations:

- 01 Have you ever arrived at the station *after* the train had left?
- 02 Have you ever reached a shop *after* it had closed?
- 03 Have you ever got to a party *after* everyone had gone home?
- 04 Have you ever started a film *after* your friend had already told you the ending?

II

## GRAMMAR FOCUS

### The past perfect — the past **BEFORE** the past

#### Form — had + past participle

We use the **past perfect** to show that one past action happened **before** another past action.

#### POSITIVE FORM

subject + **had** + **past participle**

#### TWO PAST POINTS IN TIME



► **The earlier action uses "had + past participle"**

When two things happened in the past, the **earlier** one uses **past perfect** (had + V3), and the **later** one uses **past simple**.

When I **arrived** at the cinema, the film **had started**.

She **felt** sick because she **had eaten** too much cake.

We **were** hungry because we **hadn't eaten** breakfast.

He **knew** the city well because he **had lived** there before.

**Use 1 – "by the time" ... "had already done"**

► **The "by the time" pattern**

Use **by the time** + past simple at the start, and **past perfect** for the thing that had already happened.

**BY THE TIME** I **got** home, my parents **had gone** to bed.

**BY THE TIME** we **arrived**, most guests **had left**.

**BY THE TIME** the teacher **came** in, everyone **had sat** down.

## Use 2 — with *already, just, never, yet*

### ► Adverbs that love the past perfect

These four small words make the "earlier past" meaning clearer.

#### **already**

before that moment in the past

We **had already eaten** when she called.

#### **just**

a very short time before

I **had just finished** my homework when the power went out.

#### **never**

not at any time before

He **had never seen** snow before that winter.

#### **yet (in ?)**

up to that past moment

**Had you finished** dinner **yet**?

## Negatives & questions

### **Negative**

**HAD + NOT + V3**

I **hadn't finished** my homework when Mum called.

They **had not met** before that party.

She **hadn't studied**, so she failed the test.

### **Question**

**HAD + SUBJECT + V3 ?**

**Had you finished** the book before the film?

**Had she seen** that film before?

Why **had he left** so early?



## KEY VOCABULARY

## Past participles you'll need

| INF → V3                               | MEANING                             | EXAMPLE WITH HAD                                    |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>leave → left</b><br>irregular       | to go away from a place             | <i>By the time I arrived, they had left.</i>        |
| <b>eat → eaten</b><br>irregular        | to put food in your mouth           | <i>I wasn't hungry because I had already eaten.</i> |
| <b>see → seen</b><br>irregular         | to notice with your eyes            | <i>She had never seen the sea before.</i>           |
| <b>forget → forgotten</b><br>irregular | to not remember                     | <i>He had forgotten his keys again.</i>             |
| <b>begin → begun</b><br>irregular      | to start something                  | <i>The film had begun when we got there.</i>        |
| <b>arrive → arrived</b><br>regular     | to reach a place                    | <i>By the time she arrived, we had finished.</i>    |
| <b>realise → realised</b><br>regular   | to suddenly understand              | <i>I realised I had forgotten my phone.</i>         |
| <b>miss → missed</b><br>regular        | to fail to catch or meet            | <i>We had missed the bus by two minutes.</i>        |
| <b>by the time</b><br>linker           | at or before a specific past moment | <i>By the time he finished, it was midnight.</i>    |
| <b>already</b><br>adverb               | before the expected time            | <i>They had already gone when I called.</i>         |



## READING

## Four times they arrived JUST too late

FIVE MINUTES LATE · ISSUE 08

### By the time they **got** there...

*Four teens, four moments of "just missed it"*

Four teens share a moment when they arrived just a little too late. Every one of them said the same magic phrase: "By the time I got there..."

AYLA, 14, TURKEY *Istanbul · Saturday morning*

THE SALE

My friend **had told** me about a big sale at our favourite bookshop. On Saturday, I **woke** up early, **dressed** quickly, and **ran** to catch the bus. But my little brother **wanted** breakfast, so I **helped** him. By the time I got to the bookshop, the sale **had ended**. The books I **had wanted** were all gone. My friend **had already bought** the last copy. I **stood** there for a minute, then I **smiled**. At least *she* got one.

**TOMOKI, 16, JAPAN** *Osaka · Friday night*

#### THE CONCERT

I **had planned** this evening for months. A concert by my favourite band. My mum **had bought** me the ticket as a birthday present. But that day, my teacher **kept** us after school for extra maths. Missed my first train. Missed my second train. By the time I **arrived** at the venue, the band **had finished** their first three songs. I **stood** at the back and **screamed** along to every song after that. It **was** still worth it.

**AMARA, 15, NIGERIA** *Lagos · Sunday afternoon*

**THE BIRTHDAY**

I **had promised** my cousin Chidi I would be at his birthday party at 2 p.m. But the traffic **was** unbelievable. By the time our car finally **reached** the house, it **was** 4:30. Chidi **had already cut** the cake. He **had already opened** the presents. All the kids **had gone** to the park to play football. Only Auntie **was** still there, cleaning up. She **smiled** at me and **said**, 'Don't worry — I **had saved** you a piece of cake.' Best auntie ever.

**MATEUS, 17, PORTUGAL** *Lisbon · Last summer*

**THE SUNSET**

A girl I **liked had invited** me to watch the sunset at a famous viewpoint. 'Come at 8:30,' she said. 'The sky is amazing.' I **wanted** to bring her something, so I **went** to a flower shop. The queue **was** long. By the time I **got** to the viewpoint, it **was** 9:15. The sun **had gone**. The sky **had turned** dark blue. But she **was** still there, waiting. I realised I **hadn't missed** anything important after all.

**Editor's note:** Notice the pattern: **past simple** for the moment they arrived — and **past perfect** for everything that had happened *before* that moment. Two past points. Two tenses.

## V

## PRACTICE

**Complete the sentences**

★ Choose the correct form. Hints: PP = past perfect (had + V3), PS = past simple, BT = "by the time", ADV = already/just/never, NEG/Q = negative or question.

- 1 When I arrived at the station, the train \_\_\_\_\_ already. [PP]  
 left                       had left                       was leaving
- 
- 2 By the time we \_\_\_\_\_ home, the pizza \_\_\_\_\_ cold. [BT]  
 got / had gone               had got / went               got / went
- 
- 3 She wasn't hungry because she \_\_\_\_\_ a big lunch. [PP]  
 ate                       has eaten                       had eaten
- 
- 4 He had \_\_\_\_\_ seen snow before that winter in Canada. [ADV]  
 ever                       never                       yet
- 
- 5 Tomoki missed the songs because his teacher \_\_\_\_\_ him after school. [PP]  
 kept                       had kept                       was keeping
- 
- 6 I \_\_\_\_\_ my homework when the power went out. [NEG]  
 didn't finish               hadn't finished               wasn't finishing
- 
- 7 "\_\_\_\_\_ you ever \_\_\_\_\_ that film before last night?" [Q]  
 Did / see                       Had / seen                       Were / seeing
- 
- 8 From the reading: By the time Amara arrived, Chidi \_\_\_\_\_ the cake. [ADV]  
 already cut                       had already cut                       was already cutting

**VI**

**SPEAKING**

**Tell me about a time you were just too late**

**Partner interview**

Ask your partner about a moment when they arrived too late. Their answer must contain **past perfect** — what had already happened before they got there?

- ▶ Have you ever arrived at school after the bell had rung?
- ▶ Have you ever got to a shop after it had closed?
- ▶ Tell me about a time you met someone after a lot had already happened.
- ▶ Have you ever started a series after everyone had finished it?
- ▶ What's something you had never done before this year?

**EXAMPLE CONVERSATION**

**A:** Have you ever arrived at school after the bell had rung?

**B:** Yes, last Tuesday! By the time I got to class, my teacher had already started the quiz.

**A:** Oh no! What did you do?

**B:** I apologised, but she said I had missed three questions.

**A:** So what had made you late?

**B:** I had forgotten my bag, so I had to run back home.

**VII**

**WRITING**

**"By the time I got there..."**

**"By the time I got there..." (80-100 words)**

Tell the story. **Where** were you going? **Why** were you late? **What had already happened** before you got there?

- at least 3 past perfect verbs (had + V3)
- at least 2 past simple verbs
- use "by the time" at least once
- use "already", "just" or "never"

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QUIZ

## Check your understanding

Circle the correct answer. Check your answers at the end.

**1. When I arrived, the film \_\_\_\_\_ already.**

- A. started
- B. had started
- C. was starting
- D. has started

**2. Which sentence is CORRECT?**

- A. By the time I got home, everyone went to bed.
- B. By the time I got home, everyone had gone to bed.
- C. By the time I had got home, everyone went to bed.
- D. By the time I got home, everyone has gone to bed.

**3. He \_\_\_\_\_ that film before, so he knew the ending.**

- A. saw
- B. has seen
- C. had seen
- D. was seeing

**4. Choose the CORRECT sentence with 'already':**

- A. I already had eaten when they called.
- B. I had eaten already when they called.
- C. I had already eaten when they called.
- D. I eaten had already when they called.

**5. Negative: She \_\_\_\_\_ her homework when her mum came in.**

- A. hadn't finished
- B. didn't finish
- C. wasn't finishing
- D. hasn't finished

**6. From the reading: By the time Amara arrived, what had happened?**

- A. Chidi was cutting the cake.
- B. Chidi had already cut the cake and opened presents.
- C. Auntie had left for the park.

D. The kids were still at the house.

**7. Question: ' \_\_\_\_\_ you ever \_\_\_\_\_ snow before that trip?'**

A. Did / see

B. Had / seen

C. Were / seeing

D. Have / seen

**8. Which sentence uses the tenses correctly?**

A. We missed the bus because we didn't leave on time.

B. We had missed the bus because we hadn't left on time.

C. We missed the bus because we hadn't left on time.

D. We had missed the bus because we didn't leave on time.

### ANSWER KEY

#### Fill in the blanks:

1. had left · 2. got / had gone · 3. had eaten · 4. never  
5. had kept · 6. hadn't finished · 7. Had / seen · 8. had already cut

#### Quiz:

1. B · 2. B · 3. C · 4. C · 5. A · 6. B · 7. B · 8. C

*Lesson complete! Next lesson: Future with will — "I'll be there in 5 minutes"*