

Getting started

- 1 Read the unusual story and number the events in the box in the order they happened, 1–6.

- a) The plane took off without the pilot.
 b) The plane had mechanical trouble.
 c) The pilot got out to restart the plane.
 d) The pilot took off.
 e) The plane started to move along.
 f) The pilot landed.



The plane that flew solo

Carol Hall looked out of her office window and wondered what was going on. A yellow, single-engine plane was moving along the runway, apparently ready for take-off, except that it just missed another aircraft that was coming in to land.

'We couldn't understand what the pilot was trying to do,' said Ms Hall.

A moment later, she found

the answer, as the pilot rushed into her office and called the emergency services. His plane had left without him. If that was unusual, what followed was almost unbelievable, as the plane got faster, lifted off into the air, and climbed to 2,000 feet.

The pilot, Paul Sirks, had taken off early in the morning to meet friends for breakfast in Illinois.

But his plane began having mechanical trouble and as he landed at Grimes Field, the engine stopped – so he got out to restart it by turning the propeller. As he did so, the engine started. And before he could get back in, the plane began to move across the airfield.

'It just got away from him and took off,' Ms Hall explained.

- 2 Put these events from the story in the correct points on the timeline below:

- a) The pilot called the emergency services.
 b) The plane left without its pilot.



- 3 Why is the past simple used for one event in the text (*the pilot ... called the emergency services*) and the past perfect used for another (*His plane had left without him*)?

Looking at language

The past perfect

Use

- 1 The past perfect is used when we are talking or writing about the past, and want to go back to an earlier time. This is usually for:
 - giving information about what happened **before** the events of the story.
He remembered their previous meeting. She'd told him her life story.
 - explaining or commenting on something in the story (often following *because*). We often use words like *always, often, never*.

Event in a story	Comment / explanation
<i>He took a second helping.</i>	<i>He'd always liked ice cream.</i>
<i>I felt uneasy about him because</i>	<i>I'd seen his face somewhere before.</i>
<i>They met at the café on the corner.</i>	<i>They'd been meeting there for years.</i>

- 2 We choose the past perfect continuous when we talk about activities that continued for a time:
It had been snowing heavily and the ground was white when John arrived.
After the match I had a sore throat because I'd been shouting so much.
- 3 If the order of events is clear because of words like *after, before, and as soon as*, we do not always have to use the past perfect. Instead we can use the past simple:
After he had his lunch he went out. or *After he had had his lunch he went out.*
- 4 The past perfect is also common:
 - in reported speech. Compare:
'We've already seen the film.' (direct speech, with the present perfect)
They told me they had already seen the film. (reported speech, with the past perfect)
(See Units 19 and 20.)
 - with *wish* to express regrets: *I wish I'd worked harder at school.* (See Unit 25.)
 - in some conditional constructions: *If I'd gone to Thailand instead of Turkey I wouldn't have met you.* (See Unit 25.)

1 Read about a boy who was bitten by a dog. Put phrases a)–d) in the correct gaps.

a) bit me b) I'd been running c) had bitten me d) I was running

That day we did a long run. I think it was five or six miles round the park. Anyway, I'd come out of the park and 1 for about half an hour and I was going back towards school, and 2 along when a dog ran into me and jumped up and 3 on the leg. It didn't hurt so I didn't stop, I just wanted to get back, but when I got back to school, it was hurting a lot. I discovered the dog 4 quite badly and I had to go to hospital.

Form

The past perfect simple is formed with *had* + past participle, and the past perfect continuous is *had been* + *-ing*.

<i>Positive statements</i>	<i>Negative statements</i>	<i>Wh- questions</i>
I / you etc. had worked I / you etc. had been working	they had not (hadn't) worked she had not (hadn't) been working	Where had they worked? How long had she been working?
<i>Yes / No questions</i>	<i>Positive short answers</i>	<i>Negative short answers</i>
Had they worked? Had she been working?	Yes, they had. Yes, she had.	No, they hadn't. No, she hadn't.

258

Getting it right

► Exercise 1 Thinking about time

A The text opposite is about the mysterious disappearance of Jim Thompson in Malaysia in 1967.

Read it and underline any examples of the past perfect.

When they got back at about 4.00, the news was not good. They had searched the main paths from the house and with help from local people they had also searched a large area of the jungle, but had found nothing. Martin had gone down to the town and asked at the taxi and bus stands, but again had found out nothing. No one had seen a tall man in his sixties. Martin and Jones had a rest and then went out again to make further enquiries.

This time they went to the golf club in Tanah Rata to ask people there if anyone had seen Jim. When they got there they found that the police had just been and interviewed everyone. One man claimed he had seen a man that looked like Jim at about 3.00 the afternoon before, walking down the hill from the golf club. When Martin and Jones asked him more questions, however, they discovered that the description did not really match. The man he had seen was wearing blue trousers and a white jacket, but Jim was wearing a pair of grey trousers and had left his jacket behind.

B In the columns below, write four events that happened before 4.00, four events that happened after 4.00, and one event on that day for which we do not know the time.

Before 4.00	After 4.00	Don't know
Example: they searched the main paths
.....
.....
.....
.....

This is a true story. Unfortunately, no one knows what happened to Jim Thompson. He has never been seen since his mysterious disappearance.

▷ Exercise 2 Comments and explanations

Add a comment or explanation to the sentences below using the words in brackets and the past perfect simple or continuous.

Example: That year he bought a large and expensive Mercedes. *He'd always wanted one.*
(always / want)

- 1 She refused the shellfish when it was offered at her table.
(never / like)
- 2 He looked exhausted and was breathing heavily. (run)
- 3 They finally let him have a better computer.
(ask for / for weeks)
- 4 I was surprised when she ordered a dessert because
(already have / three courses)
- 5 His health wasn't too good.
(have / several operations)
- 6 She was delighted to be offered the work. (just / lose her job)
- 7 I wasn't able to drive them to the airport.
(car / break down)
- 8 I was relieved when the bus came. (wait / since 7.00)
- 9 When Jim Thompson's friends woke up after their lunchtime sleep he wasn't there. They didn't expect him to be out long because
(not take / jacket)
- 10 Their performance was wonderful.
(practise / for months)

▷ Exercise 3 Learning from learners

Read the extracts from three learners' essays. Underline any mistakes with tenses and correct them. If there are no mistakes, tick (✓) the extract.

Example: My mother packed the picnic lunch and we all collected together our things. At last everything had been ready for us to go. *was*.

- 1 Mimi's family moved into the house next to mine. She became my best friend and we did everything together.
- 2 We were lucky that a group of scouts left a rope which helped us reach the bottom safely.
- 3 It has been almost six years since I last saw her. I miss everything we had done together.
- 4 This was his second marriage. He had been married before, but he had become bored.
- 5 He told his ex-wife that he has decided to marry again.
- 6 After lunch my brother and I went exploring. We had climbed a small hill behind the wood.
- 7 He met her at a disco. She had been dancing with one of his colleagues.
- 8 When I first had met her she was very quiet.
- 9 We couldn't find the way home because we have lost the path.

Which extracts are from an essay about: a) a friend's marriage breakdown? b) the learner's best friend c) a picnic?

a) b) c) *example*

▷ Exercise 4 Text completion

In this story about an argument between neighbours, fill in the gaps using the verb in brackets in the past perfect simple or continuous. You can use any other language you need.

The arguments started quite suddenly one Sunday. Everything had been perfectly friendly between the neighbours up to that point.

Graham *had just got home* (get home) when his neighbour, Sally, stopped him on the path they shared. She was holding up her muddy hands – she 1 (garden) and she looked very angry.

'I was just going to cut back my rose bushes but someone 2 (do) it. Was it you?'

Graham denied it, but secretly he felt quite pleased because the bushes 3 (grow) over the path. A few days later Graham received a note through his door asking him to cut down one of the trees in his garden because it was blocking Sally's view. He wrote her a note refusing. When he got home from work the next day, he discovered that someone 4 (cut down). He was furious.

A few weeks later, Sally decided to pick some vegetables from her garden. She had seen them the day before and she

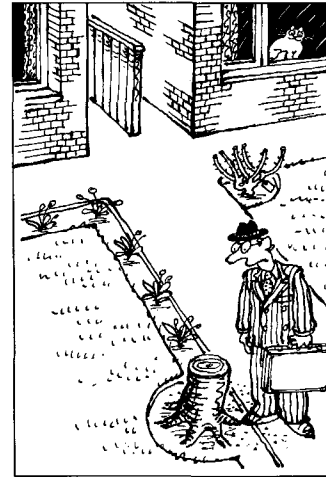
5 (*decide*) they were ready to eat.

But they 6

She was very angry with Graham, but then she and Graham read about someone who

7 (*cut down*) bushes and trees.

The police 8 (*catch*) him while he was cutting down a small tree!



Classwork

1 Work alone. Choose **one** of the sentences below, and think of a way of ending it using the past perfect.

- a) She was wearing one red sock and one white, because ...
- b) She was fired from her job because ...
- c) She looked exhausted because ...
- d) She was furious with Holly because ...
- e) She spent much more than usual because ...
- f) She got home more than three hours late because ...
- g) The house was a complete mess because ...
- h) She couldn't afford a taxi because ...

2 Tell the class your ending only. Can they guess the correct beginning?

Example:

A: Here's my ending: 'she'd forgotten to post her letters.'

B: Is it d)?

A: That's right.