**1.1 Past and perfect tenses**

**1 Past simple**

We use the past simple

• for actions that happened at a specific time in the past.

John went to bed at 10 o'clock.

• for a sequence of short actions.

Helen had a shower, brushed her teeth and went to bed.

**2 Past continuous**

We use the past continuous

• to describe a scene in the past.

It was a beautiful morning. The sun was shining and the birds were singing.

• to talk about actions or events that were in progress around a particular time in the past.

'What were you doing at 1 o’clock?' 'I was having lunch.'

• for a longer action that is interrupted by a shorter action. (We use the past simple for the shorter action that interrupts the longer one.)

While I was waiting for the bus, it started to rain.

**3 Past perfect simple**

We use the past perfect for an action that happened before a specific time in the past. (See also 1.2.)

I couldn't get into the house because I had forgotten key.

**4 Present perfect simple**

We use the present perfect

• for recent events, particularly when giving news.

Have you heard the news? Brazil have won the World Cup.

• for an action that happened at some unspecified time in the past. (If we specify the time, we use the past simple.)

I've been to France three times.

• for events that began in the past and continue up to the present, particularly with non-continuous verbs. (With other verbs we normally use the present perfect continuous. See below.)

I've known Pete for six years.

• for recent past events that have a result in the present.

I've finished my homework so I can go out now.

**5 Present perfect continuous**

We use the present perfect continuous

• for actions that are still in progress. (We use the present perfect simple for recent actions that are completed.)

I've been playing the piano a lot recently. (And I may continue to play.)

• with action verbs to say how long an action or event has been in progress. (We use for, since or how long.)

Jake has been watching TV for three hours.

• to explain a current situation in terms of recent events.

My hands are dirty because I’ve been mending my bike.

**1 Complete the sentences with the correct past or perfect form of the verbs in brackets.**

1 Sorry l’m late. How long . . . . . . you . . . . . . ? (wait)

2 Sam . . . . . ., . . . . . . the magazine and . . . . . . it on the table. (bend down / pick up / put)

3 Jason told Kate that he . . . . . . never . . . . . . her. (love)

4 It was 5.30. The shops . . . . . . and people . . . . . . their way home from work. (close / make)

5 Did you know? Tony and Carolyn . . . . . . just . . . . . . (get engaged)

6 ‘Why are you out of breath?’ ‘I . . . . . . . ’(run)

7 Tom wasn’t at home when I . . . . . . He . . . . . . out for a run. (call / go)

8 Yesterday evening at eight o’clock I . . . . . . my mum to . . . . . . prepare the dinner. (help)

9 ‘. . . . . . you . . . . . .the dog for a walk?’ ‘No, not yet.’ (take)

10 ‘How long . . . . . . that car?’ ‘I . . . . . . it about a year ago.’ (have / buy)

11 The post . . . . . . while we . . . . . . breakfast. (arrive /have)

12 The referee . . . . . .his whistle at precisely three o’clock and the match . . . . . . . (blow / start)

13 Andrew . . . . . . his hand, so he can’t take part in the table tennis tournament. (hurt)

14 The sun . . . . . . when we . . . . . .. (shine / set off)

**1.2 Past perfect simple and continuous**

**1 Past perfect simple**

We use the past perfect simple for

• an action that happened before a specific time in the past.

After I had been to the post office, I went to the bank.

• with state verbs *(know, be, like, etc.)* and *for* or *since* to say how long an action had been in progress.

Harry and Tessa had known each other for only six months before they got married.

**2 Past perfect continuous**

We use the past perfect continuous

• to show the cause of something in the past.

The pavement was wet. It had been raining.

• with action verbs and for or since to say how long an action had been in progress.

I'd been learning English for ten years before I first visited an English-speaking country.

**1 Choose the correct tense.**

1 How long had you **owned / been owning** the flat before you sold it?

2 My shoes were dirty because I had **worked / been working** in the garden.

3 She had **learnt / been learning** to drive for six years but she still failed her driving test.

4 Had you ever **visited / been visiting** Holland before you started learning Dutch?

5 I was thirsty because l’d **played / been playing** football all morning.

6 James told the police officer that he hadn’t **seen / been seeing** the accident.

7 After l’d **read / been reading** the letter, I threw it in the bin.

8 I had **revised/been revising** for two hours so I took a break.

**1.3 Stylistic inversion**

We can invert the subject and verb in affirmative sentences in order to alter the emphasis within a sentence and achieve a heightened dramatic effect.

I had never seen such a terrible- mess!

— Never **had I seen** such a terrible mess!

In stylistic inversion, we use the same form of the verb as the interrogative.

He not only won the race, he also set a new world record.

— Not only did he win the race, he also set a new world record.

Such sentences are usually introduced by negative or restrictive adverbial words and phrases such as *never, not since, not only, no sooner... than, hardly, rarely/seldom*. We can also use adverbs such as *only, so, here, well*.

Not since the Beatles in the 60s has a pop group had so many number 1 hits.

No sooner had I got to the beach than it started to rain.

Here is your umbrella.

We can also use stylistic inversion in some conditional sentences, starting with *had* or *were*, and omitting *if.*

If I had known you were at home, l'd have rung you.

— Had I known you were at home, l'd have rung you.

If I were very wealthy, l'd buy a holiday home in France.

— Were I very wealthy, l'd buy a holiday home in France.

1. **Rewrite the sentences using stylistic inversion. Start with the words given.**
2. I have rarely felt so happy. Rarely ...
3. I remember well the day my first child was born. Well...
4. Harry had never been so embarrassed. Never...
5. If he’d looked both ways before Crossing the road, he wouldn’t have been knocked down. Had ...
6. Fred can not only dance well, he’s also got a wonderful voice. Not only...
7. I was so terrified that I couldn’t move a muscle. So ...
8. A team hasn’t won twenty matches on the trot since 2003. Not since ...
9. We had hardly started our meal when there was a knock on the door. Hardly...
10. If she were less self-centred, she might have more friends. Were...
11. Kate left home only when she had got married. Only when …