The Past Tense – Past Perfect

There are three aspects of the present tense:

1) Simple past
2) Past progressive
3) Past perfect (simple and progressive)

The past perfect (simple) tense is used to describe an action that has been completed before another past action. It is also used to describe an action that happened in the distant past (when it is understood that other actions have happened since that action).

• Use the helping verb “has” before a verb in past perfect simple tense to describe all subjects (I, we, you, they, he, she, it).

[subject] [had] [past participle]

Example: It had rained a lot before she came to town.
Example: I had studied very hard for the exams.

• Use the helping verb “been” after “had” when using the verb “to be” in the past perfect simple tense.

[subject] [had] [been] [object clause]

Example: She had been late to class several times before she got detention.
Example: His family had been nice in the past.

Directions: Complete the following sentences in the past perfect simple tense.

1) She _____ _________ (to write) six letters before she got a response.
2) It _____ always _________ (to snow) here before 1978.
3) Dan _____ _________ (to be) sick for three days before he got better.
4) Li and Susan _____ _________ (to try) four times before they gave up.
5) My father’s old car _____ _________ (to run) very well before he sold it.
6) We _____ not _________ (to take) the test before.
7) My uncle _____ _________ (to visit) China several times in the past, so this visit was nothing new.
8) Our father _____ never _________ (to drive) to California.
9) I _____ _________ (to speak) to the president twice before, so I was not that nervous.
10) The old man _____ occasionally _________ (to need) help crossing the street.

Directions: Put the following sentences in past perfect simple tense.

1) I do the laundry.
Directions: Now make your own sentences in the past perfect simple tense.

1) ___________________________________________

2) ___________________________________________

The past perfect (progressive) tense is used to describe an action that was happening before another past action. It is also used to describe an action that was happening in the distant past.

• Use the helping verb phrase “had been” before a verb in past perfect progressive tense to describe all subjects (I, we, you, they, he, she, it).

 [subject] [had] [been] [verb + “ing”]

Example: He had been running for twenty minutes before he collapsed.

Example: I had been trying to design a safer car for six years.

Directions: Write the correct form of the verb in the spaces below.

1) We _____ _____ _________ (to learn) English at a private school in Hampton.
2) He _____ _____ _________ (to go) to the beach everyday before the summer ended.
3) I _____ _____ _________ (to play) the piano everyday after school.
4) Li _____ _____ _________ (to talk) to her friends before class started.
5) Wang, Ted, and Ko _____ _____ _________ (to drive) all day.
6) Andy and I _____ _____ _________ (to look) for my keys for two hours before we found them.
7) The Colorado River _____ _____ _________ (to flow) for centuries before it was dammed by beavers.
8) My new car _____ _____ _________ (to make) strange noises until I took it to a mechanic.
9) Tommy _____ not _____ _________ (to save) his money for as long as he claims.
10) Nidia _____ _____ _________ (to live) in New York for ten years before I met her.

Directions: Put the following sentences in past perfect progressive tense.

1) I go to work everyday.

2) Sarah wears jeans all the time.

Directions: Now make your own sentences in the past perfect progressive tense.

1) ___________________________________________

2) ___________________________________________