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Grammar Reference

1. Past perfect

A - Formation

The **past perfect** is formed using **'had'** + **past participle**.

Example:

She met someone she **had** already **seen** before.
When we opened the door, we realized a thief **had stolen** the TV.

B - Use

The **past perfect** may express:

- an action completed **before a given time** in the **past**

Example:

When they arrived, we **had** already **finished** eating.

She **told** me she **had tried** to reach me.

I **had** never **seen** this movie **before then**.

- a state or action **beginning** in the **past** and **continuing** until some **later** time in the **past**

Example:

They **had been** friends for ten years **when he left**.

Note: In such cases, actions are expressed using the **continuous past perfect**.

Example: How long **had** you **been waiting** for me **when I called you yesterday?**

- a **recent** action or state, in which case '**just**' is used with the **simple past perfect**

Example:

I **had just finished** writing a letter when you knocked at the door.

Note: The **continuous** form may also express a recent action.

Example: You could tell he **had been sleeping**.

- in order to respect the **sequence of tenses in indirect discourse**, a state or action that was originally (in **direct discourse**) expressed in the **preterite** or **present perfect**

Example:

She **told** me she **had won**.

(Direct discourse: She **won**.)

They **said** they **had been walking** all day long.

(Direct discourse: They **have been walking** all day long.)

2. 'To look forward to'

'**To look forward to**' can be used with:

- a **noun**

Example: I'm **looking forward to** the vacation.

- a **gerund** (verb ending in '**-ing**')

Example: We're **looking forward to** **seeing** you.

3. Words ending in 'ever'

The suffix '-ever' is added to some **relative pronouns, adjectives and adverbs** and **interrogatives** and may express one of two things:

- **absence of restriction**

Example:

Can I withdraw money **whenever** I like?

Choose **whichever** book you like.

- **the idea of possibility** in concessive clauses; words ending in '-ever' are in this case used with the auxiliary 'may', as in the structure '**however**' + **adjective** or **adverb**

Example: **Whatever** you may think, it was a mistake to trust him.

However clever he **may** be, he can still do stupid things.