

THE PAST PERFECT TENSE

(I had done)

Look at these sentences :

1. After the sociologist had identified the factors involved in delinquency, he went on to offer possible solutions.
2. Before I visited the Holy Mosque in Medinah, I had performed the Lesser Pilgrimage ('Umrah).

In each of the above sentences there are two actions that happened in the past: "had identified" and "went on" in Example (1); "visited" and "had performed" in (2). One of these two actions had happened before the other. The sociologist went on to offer solutions only after having identified the factors. We use the Past Perfect Tense ("had" + past participle) to refer to the action that had taken place first.

Note that the Past Perfect Tense is usually used together with the Simple Past Tense. In some cases, however, the Past Perfect is used without the Simple Past being used with it (as when there is a time expression with "by"); e.g.

By 1100, a lot of French vocabulary had come into use in Britain. (i.e. Before the year 1100 came, a lot of French vocabulary had come into use).

Exercise 19

Put the verb in parentheses into the Simple Past or the Past Perfect Tense :

1. Immediately after the Demonstrator (pass) the TOEFL and GRE, he (get) the admission.
2. After they (circumambulate) the Holy Ka'ba, the pilgrims (run) seven times between Safa and Marwah.
3. Before he (obtain) a grant, the applicant (submit) his credentials to the Financial Assistance Committee.
4. He went to the police stating with a purse that he (find) on the pavement.
5. By the end of the year they (save) two thousand riyals.
6. If there (be) a mistake, I would have told you.
7. I went to see my friend, who just (come back) from abroad.
8. He would have missed the plane if he (arrive) late at the airport.
9. There was a car by the side of the road. It (break) down and the driver was trying to repair it. So we (stop) to see if we could help.
10. I invited my friend to dinner last night but he couldn't come. He already (arrange) to do something else.