

THE PAST PERFECT CONTINUOUS TENSE

(I had been doing)

Look at these sentences :

1. The relatives of the hostages had been waiting anxiously for hours when they finally caught sight of the hijacked plane.
2. By 1.00 A.M. I had been trying for hours to get through, but the international circuits to the country I was calling had been congested.

The underlined verb forms are in the Past Perfect Continuous Tense. We use this tense to denote an action which (a) continued up to a specific point in the past and then ended; or (b) continued up to, and after, a specific point in the past. We use this tense to show how long something had been happening before something else happened.

Lexercise 20

A. Put the verb in parentheses into the Past Perfect Continuous :

1. The in-patient (use) medication for fifteen days when he was discharged.
2. The ship set out on its voyage on April 1st and reached its destination on April 20th. On April 15th, the ship (sail) for two weeks.
3. The members of the expedition, who had got lost in the desert, (wait) for two days when the rescue team finally arrived.
4. By 10.30, I (wait) in the lounge for two and a half hours, and the Director still hadn't turned up.

B. Write sentences, using the Past Perfect Continuous Tense as shown in the example below:

Example:

We began doing our homework. After two hours the lights went out.

We when

ANSWER:

We had been doing our homework for two hours when the lights went out.

1. Mr. and Mrs. X went to live in the Northern Province. Six months later Mr. X received a scholarship.

They when

2. I had arranged to meet my roommate in a restaurant. I arrived and began waiting. After twenty minutes I realized that I had come to the wrong restaurant.

I when