



Tense Comparison: Past Simple vs Past Perfect

Fill in the blank with the correct option.

- When I arrived at the station, the train ___ already ____.
a) has / left
b) had / left
c) was / leaving
d) did / leave
- She ___ dinner before her husband came home.
a) cooked
b) was cooking
c) had cooked
d) has cooked
- After he ___ the email, he turned off the computer.
a) has sent
b) sent
c) was sending
d) had sent
- I ___ never ___ such a beautiful sunset before that day.
a) was / seeing
b) did / see
c) have / seen
d) had / seen
- By the time we got to the cinema, the film ____.
a) has started
b) started
c) had started
d) was starting
- I realized I ___ my wallet at home.
a) have left
b) left
c) was leaving
d) had left
- She ___ to Paris twice before she moved there.
a) was
b) had been
c) has been
d) went
- When I woke up, the snow ____.
a) had stopped
b) stopped
c) has stopped
d) was stopping
- After the guests ____, we cleaned the house.
a) left
b) have left
c) had left
d) were leaving
- He didn't know her name because they ___ never ___ before.
a) had / met
b) were / meeting
c) did / meet
d) have / met
- I ___ the report by the time the meeting started.
a) finished
b) was finishing
c) have finished
d) had finished

12. The children ____ asleep before their parents came home.
a) have fallen
b) were falling
c) fell
d) had fallen
13. I ____ just ____ eating when the phone rang.
a) was / finishing
b) have / finished
c) did / finish
d) had / finished
14. She was very upset because she ____ her job.
a) has lost
b) lost
c) was losing
d) had lost
15. Before I ____ to bed, I checked all the doors.
a) went
b) have gone
c) had gone
d) was going
16. The thief ____ by the time the police arrived.
a) escaped
b) has escaped
c) had escaped
d) was escaping
17. I ____ already ____ breakfast when you called me.
a) was / eating
b) did / eat
c) have / eaten
d) had / eaten
18. She looked different because she ____ her hair.
a) has dyed
b) had dyed
c) was dyeing
d) dyed
19. After we ____ lunch, we went for a walk.
a) had
b) were having
c) have had
d) had had
20. When I got home, I discovered that someone ____ into my flat.
a) was breaking
b) has broken
c) broke
d) had broken



Answers

1. b) had / left
2. c) had cooked
3. d) had sent
4. d) had / seen
5. c) had started
6. d) had left
7. b) had been
8. a) had stopped
9. c) had left
10. a) had / met
11. d) had finished
12. d) had fallen
13. d) had / finished
14. d) had lost
15. a) went
16. c) had escaped
17. d) had / eaten
18. b) had dyed
19. d) had had
20. d) had broken



Explanations

1. “had / left” (b)

The train left before I arrived. Past Perfect 'had left' shows the earlier action.

2. “had cooked” (c)

The cooking was completed before the husband's arrival, so Past Perfect is used.

3. “had sent” (d)

'After' + Past Perfect shows the first completed action before the second.

4. “had / seen” (d)

Past Perfect is used for experiences before a specific past time.

5. “had started” (c)

'By the time' + Past Perfect shows the action was completed before another past event.

6. “had left” (d)

The leaving of the wallet happened before the realization.

7. “had been” (b)

The visits happened before the move (both in the past).

8. “had stopped” (a)

The snow stopped before the waking up, so Past Perfect is used.

9. “had left” (c)

'After' + earlier action uses Past Perfect to show sequence clearly.

10. “had / met” (a)

The (not) meeting happened before the past moment when he didn't know her.

11. “had finished” (d)

'By the time' signals the action was completed before another past event.

12. “had fallen” (d)

The falling asleep happened before the parents' arrival.

13. “had / finished” (d)

'Just' + Past Perfect shows a recently completed action before another past event.

14. “had lost” (d)

The job loss happened before her upset state (both in the past).

15. “went” (a)

'Before' already shows order; the later action (going to bed) uses Past Simple.

16. “had escaped” (c)

The escape happened before the police arrival, so Past Perfect is used.

17. “had / eaten” (d)

'Already' + Past Perfect shows the breakfast was finished before the call.

18. “had dyed” (b)

The dyeing happened before the moment of looking, so Past Perfect is used.

19. “had had” (d)

'After' + the earlier action uses Past Perfect 'had had' (had + past participle of 'have').

20. “had broken” (d)

The break-in happened before the discovery, so Past Perfect is used.