



Tense Comparison: Past Perfect Simple vs Continuous

Fill in the blank with the correct option.

1. She was tired because she ____ all night.
a) had worked
b) was working
c) had been working
d) worked
2. By 10 PM, he ____ the entire book.
a) had been reading
b) was reading
c) read
d) had read
3. They ____ for two hours when the bus finally arrived.
a) had waited
b) had been waiting
c) were waiting
d) waited
4. I ____ the email before you reminded me.
a) was already sending
b) had already sent
c) already sent
d) had already been sending
5. Her eyes were red. It was obvious she ____.
a) was crying
b) cried
c) had been crying
d) had cried
6. He ____ three different jobs before he found the right one.
a) had tried
b) tried
c) was trying
d) had been trying
7. The ground was wet because it ____ all morning.
a) had rained
b) had been raining
c) was raining
d) rained
8. I ____ the report before the meeting started.
a) finished
b) had finished
c) was finishing
d) had been finishing
9. She looked exhausted. She ____ since 6 AM.
a) had been running
b) was running
c) had run
d) ran
10. By the end of the day, he ____ 100 customers.
a) had served
b) had been serving
c) served
d) was serving
11. How long ____ you ____ before you found a parking space?
a) had / been driving
b) did / drive
c) were / driving
d) had / driven



Answers

1. c) had been working
2. d) had read
3. b) had been waiting
4. b) had already sent
5. c) had been crying
6. a) had tried
7. b) had been raining
8. b) had finished
9. a) had been running
10. a) had served
11. a) had / been driving
12. d) had drunk
13. a) had been playing
14. a) had known
15. a) had been training
16. c) had cooked
17. b) had been standing
18. c) had worked
19. b) had been staring
20. c) had read



Explanations

1. “had been working” (c)

Past Perfect Continuous emphasizes the duration of the activity that caused tiredness.

2. “had read” (d)

The focus is on the completed result (entire book), so Past Perfect Simple is used.

3. “had been waiting” (b)

'For two hours' emphasizes duration up to that past moment, using Past Perfect Continuous.

4. “had already sent” (b)

The focus is on the completed action (email was sent), so Past Perfect Simple is used.

5. “had been crying” (c)

The visible effect (red eyes) comes from continuous crying activity.

6. “had tried” (a)

The focus is on the completed number (three jobs), so Past Perfect Simple is used.

7. “had been raining” (b)

'All morning' emphasizes the duration of the rain that caused the wet ground.

8. “had finished” (b)

The focus is on the completed result (finished report), so Past Perfect Simple is used.

9. “had been running” (a)

'Since 6 AM' emphasizes the duration of the activity causing exhaustion.

10. “had served” (a)

The focus is on the completed quantity (100 customers).

11. “had / been driving” (a)

'How long' asks about duration, using Past Perfect Continuous.

12. “had drunk” (d)

The focus is on the completed quantity (five cups).

13. “had been playing” (a)

The visible effect (dirty) results from continuous playing activity.

14. “had known” (a)

'Know' is a stative verb and doesn't use continuous forms, even for duration.

15. “had been training” (a)

The emphasis is on the duration of training that caused exhaustion.

16. “had cooked” (c)

The focus is on the completed result (dinner was ready).

17. “had been standing” (b)

'All day' emphasizes duration of standing that caused aching.

18. “had worked” (c)

Both forms are possible, but 'had worked' emphasizes the complete period.

19. “had been staring” (b)

'All morning' emphasizes the duration of staring that caused the headache.

20. “had read” (c)

The focus is on the completed action (finished the book earlier).