Past perfect

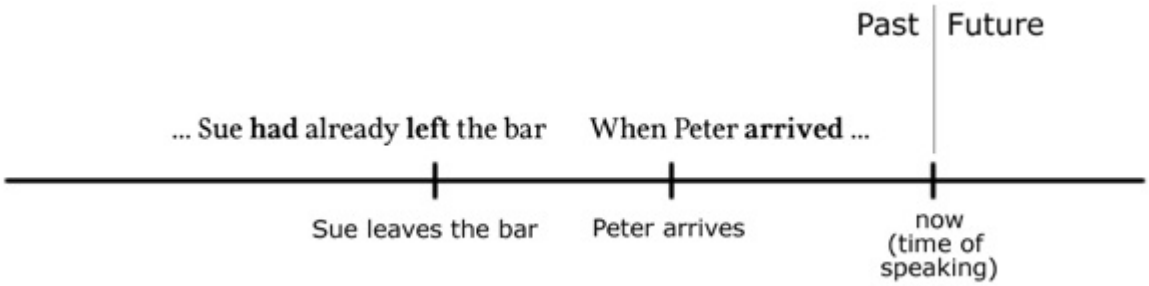
Simple form

Event in the past perfect before another past event

The past perfect shows that an event in the past happened **before** another event in the past.

(1) Lisa **couldn't** pay. She **had forgotten** her purse.

(2) When Peter **arrived**, Sue **had already left** the bar.

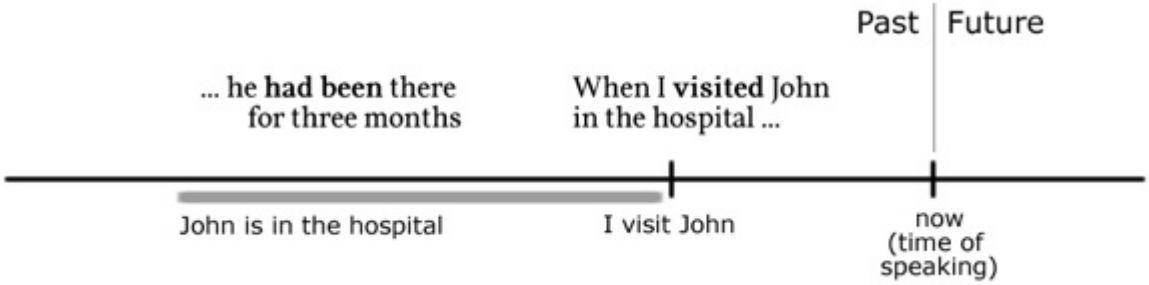


The past perfect is used to say that one past action followed another. The action in the past perfect happened earlier.

Past state [Zustand] before a past event

(3) She **had known** him for years when he **told** her that he was gay.

(4) When I **visited** John in the hospital, he **had been there** for three months.



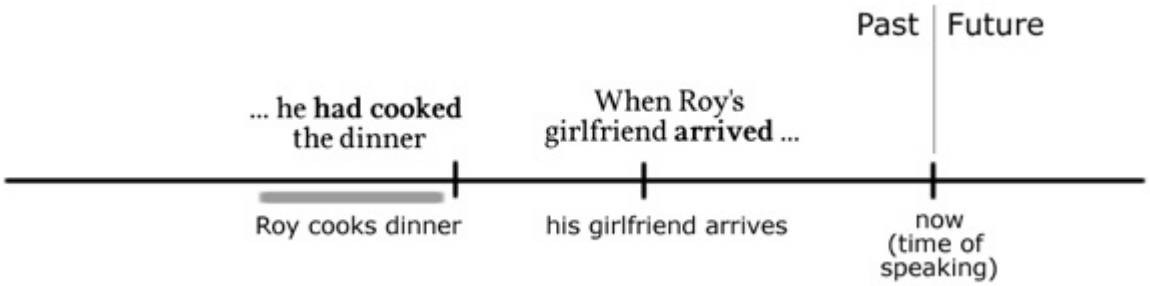
We can also use the past perfect to speak about a state (Zustand) that began before a

point of time in the past and lasted up to that point of time.

Comparison: past perfect ⟷ past tense

Past perfect

(5) When Roy’s girlfriend **arrived** he **had cooked** the dinner.

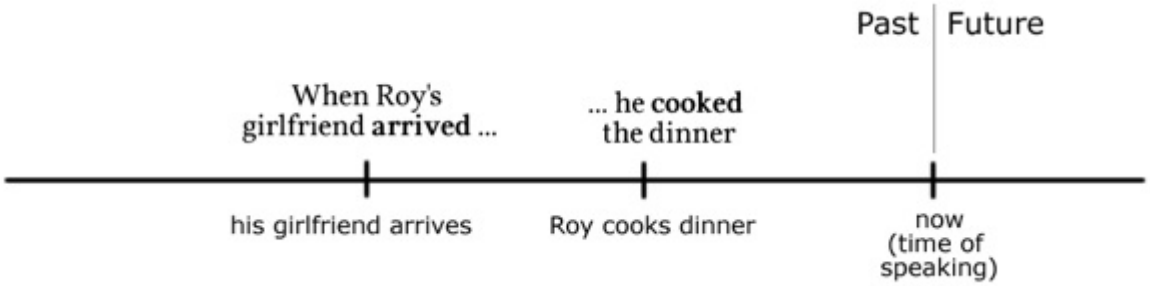


The dinner is ready when she arrives.

An event in the past perfect happened earlier than the event in the past tense.

Past tense

(6) When Roy’s girlfriend **arrived** he **cooked** the dinner.



He starts cooking the dinner *after* she arrives.

Several (mehrere) events in the past tense are seen as a sequence of events (Abfolge von Ereignissen) in the past (and happened in the order in which they are named in the text). This is especially common in stories etc.

Progressive form

The past perfect progressive is used much like the simple form but you use it if you want to stress [betonen] the duration [Dauer] of the event in the past perfect or if it's important to say how long it had been going on when the other past event happened.

(7) When Roy's girlfriend **arrived** he **had been cooking** dinner **for three hours**.

(8) Tom **had been dreaming** about doing a bungee jump **for years** when he finally **decided** to do it.



In sentence (7) the speaker [Sprecher] wants to stress [betonen] that Roy had been cooking *for three hours*. In sentence (8) it is stressed that Tom had been dreaming *for years*. That's why the past perfect perfect progressive is used.

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