

Upper-intermediate grammar exercise: past simple vs. past perfect

English grammar practice exercise, upper-intermediate

This exercise focuses on the difference between the past simple and the past perfect.

Exercise instructions

Complete the sentences below by putting the verb in brackets into the past simple or past perfect.

1. While I was away on holiday, my sister (fall) _____ ill and I had to come home.
2. By the time we reached Frankfurt I (already/be) _____ very tired of driving.
3. There was a terrible atmosphere in the room. They (have) _____ an argument just before I came.
4. First she (be) _____ a teacher, then she became a journalist.
5. I gave my friend directions to my house, but later realised that I (forgot) _____ to give her the exact address.
6. I got to work this morning and was angry when I saw that no one (arrive) _____ yet.
7. He awoke thinking he was in a prison and that he'd been arrested for robbery. He then realised that it (all/be) _____ just a bad dream.
8. Michael had a black eye. It looked as if he (be) _____ in a fight.

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Key

1. While I was away on holiday, my sister (fall) **fell** ill and I had to come home.
2. By the time we reached Frankfurt I (already/be) **was already** very tired of driving.
3. There was a terrible atmosphere in the room. They (have) **had had / 'd had / had been having / 'd been having** an argument just before I came.
4. First she (be) **was** a teacher, then she became a journalist.
5. I gave my friend directions to my house, but later realised that I (forgot) **had forgotten / 'd forgotten** to give her the exact address.
6. I got to work this morning and was angry when I saw that no one (arrive) **had arrived** yet.
7. He awoke thinking he was in a prison and that he'd been arrested for robbery. He then realised that it (all/be) **had all been** just a bad dream.
8. Michael had a black eye. It looked as if he (be) **had been / 'd been** in a fight.

Online version of this exercise

<https://goo.gl/xKovtb>