

# Past Perfect

## 1. Formation

We form the past perfect with **had** + the *past participle*.

*I had written a letter.*

*She had not read my letter.*

*Had you worked?*

The past participle often ends in **-ed** (opened, decided) but many important verbs are irregular (lost, written, done, etc.).

## 2. Use

With the help of the past perfect we can express the idea that one past action followed another. The **action that happened first** is in the past perfect.

*Nina had already left the coffee bar by the time I arrived.*

The past perfect is also used to refer to a **state**. The state **began before a point of time in the past** and **continued** to that time.

*When I visited John in hospital, he had been there for ten days.*

We use the past perfect for an action only when we need to emphasize that it **happened before another action**.

Compare:

*When Roy's friends arrived, he had cooked the lunch.*

*When Roy's friends arrived, he cooked the lunch.*