

Past Perfect Continuous - Structure

How do we make the past perfect continuous tense in English?

Note: This is also called the **past perfect progressive** tense.

Positive form

Use the **past perfect of "be" (had been)** and the **verb-ing form**.

Full form	Short form
I had been playing	I'd been playing
you had been playing	you'd been playing
he had been playing	he'd been playing
she had been playing	she'd been playing
it had been playing	it'd been playing
we had been playing	we'd been playing
they had been playing	they'd been playing

For example:

- I **had been living** in Sydney since March that year.
- He'd **been staying** at a hotel for weeks before he found an apartment.
- They'd **been cooking** all day when I arrived.

Negative form

Put **"not"** between **"had"** and **"been"**.

Full form	Short forms	
I had not been playing	I hadn't been playing	*I'd not been playing
you had not been playing	you hadn't been playing	you'd not been playing
he had not been playing	he hadn't been playing	he'd not been playing
she had not been playing	she hadn't been playing	she'd not been playing
it had not been playing	it hadn't been playing	it'd not been playing
we had not been playing	we hadn't been playing	we'd not been playing
they had not been playing	they hadn't been playing	they'd not been playing

*The structure in the third column is sometimes used in British English, but it is rarely used in other varieties of English. When used in other varieties, it sounds quite formal.

For example:

- You **had not been listening** to the teacher.
- She **had not been studying** every day.
- The computer **hadn't been working** well, so we drew the design by hand.
(it hadn't been working)
- We **hadn't been going out** much.
- They **'d not been answering** the phone.

Question forms

Invert the subject and "had", and then put a question word ("what", "who", etc.) at the beginning for wh- questions.

Yes/No questions	
	Had I been playing ?
	Had you been playing ?
	Had he been playing ?
	Had she been playing ?
	Had it been playing ?
	Had we been playing ?
	Had they been playing ?

Wh- questions	
What Who Where When Why How etc.	had I been playing ?
	had you been playing ?
	had he been playing ?
	had she been playing ?
	had it been playing ?
	had we been playing ?
	had they been playing ?

For example:

- Had I **been worrying** too much?
- Had it **been snowing** before we woke up?
- What **had** you **been doing** all day?
- Where **had** he **been living** before that?
- How long **had** we **been waiting**?