Past Perfect - Structure

How do we make the past perfect tense in English?

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

Positive form

Use the **past simple of *have* (*had*)** and the **past participle**.

Full form	Short form
I **had played**	I**'d played**
you **had played**	you**'d played**
he **had played**	he**'d played**
she **had played**	she**'d played**
it **had played**	it**'d played**
we **had played**	we**'d played**
they **had played**	they**'d played**

For example:

- I **had played** chess with him before.
- She**'d worked** there since 2015.
- They**'d** already **cleaned** the bathroom.

Some notes on short forms:
1. We usually contract ***had*** with personal pronouns in speaking and informal writing: I'd, you'd, he'd, etc.
2. We usually contract ***had*** with the words ***that***, ***this***, ***those*** and ***these*** in speaking, and sometimes in informal writing: that'd, those'd, etc.
3. We often contract ***had*** with nouns and other words in speaking, but not in writing. For example, we do not usually write: ~~Jane'd~~, ~~the dog'd~~, ~~nobody'd~~, etc.
4. We do not usually contract verbs in writing if we have a compound subject: ~~Jane and I'd~~.

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Negative form

Put ***not*** after the **past simple of *have* (*had*)**.

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

*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:

- I **hadn't finished** my assignment by the deadline.
- Melissa **hadn't been** to Australia before. (she hadn't been)
- It **had not arrived** yet.
- He **hadn't spoken** to them all day.
- We**'d not seen** her since Christmas.

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 **played**?
	Had you **played**?
	Had he **played**?
	Had she **played**?
	Had it **played**?
	Had we **played**?
	Had they **played**?

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

For example:

- **Had** I **written** the address correctly?
- **Had** you **seen** the movie before?
- **Had** Maria **emailed** you the results yet? (had she emailed)
- What **had** you **done** that day?
- How long **had** we **known** John when he got married?
- Who **had** they **invited** to the party?

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Short answers

Positive	Negative	
Yes, I **had**.	No, I **hadn't**.	*No, I**'d not**.
Yes, you **had**.	No, you **hadn't**.	No, you**'d not**.
Yes, he **had**.	No, he **hadn't**.	No, he**'d not**.
Yes, she **had**.	No, she **hadn't**.	No, she**'d not**.
Yes, it **had**.	No, it **hadn't**.	No, it**'d not**.
Yes, we **had**.	No, we **hadn't**.	No, we**'d not**.
Yes, they **had**.	No, they **hadn't**.	No, they**'d not**.

*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.

Notes:
1. We do not use short forms in positive short answers.
2. We sometimes use full forms in negative short answers (e.g. No, I had not.), but this is rare and mainly used in very formal contexts or for emphasis.

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