

UNIT 3 – HUMAN RELATIONS

PAST PERFECT TENSE

In this story the author used the past perfect tense (had + past participle) in many sentences. If you observe the following sentences from the story and the rules given under them, you will understand why and how the **past perfect tense** is used.

1. It was 10.20 ... My father had already left. (Paragraph 6)

When an action takes place before a point of time in the past, the action is expressed in the past perfect tense. (Sometimes the point of time can be understood from the earlier sentences and other contextual clues.)

2. Finally, we reached Dirang. The bus from Tawang had not yet reached Dirang. (Paragraph 1)

When two actions in the past are clearly separated by time, the earlier action is expressed in the past perfect tense.

3. I quickly sat down on a rock. My father laughed at my plight. (Paragraph 7)

When two actions in the past happen simultaneously, both of them are expressed in the past tense.

4. A) Sunita had never seen a bear before she was transferred to Maredumili. (not from the story)

B) Sindh closed the door because she heard loud noises from outside.

C) I never met him after I left India.

Normally, when the time relation is unambiguous (by the use of before, after, because, etc) the simple past (past perfect is optional) is used to refer to both past actions.

Comment on the use of simple past tense / past perfect tense (as illustrated above) in the following sentences. Identify the tense and give reasons for the use of the tense used.

1. I had come home this time round for a special purpose: to get married. My parents had arranged my marriage according to the customs of our tribal society.

- ‘had come’ – **Past Perfect Tense**
- ‘had arranged’ - **Past Perfect Tense**

When two actions in the past happen simultaneously, both of them are expressed in the past tense.

2. Time flew, and five months into my marriage I realized it.

- ‘flew’ – past action
- ‘realized’ – action in the past

When two actions in the past happen simultaneously, both of them are expressed in the past tense.

3. But after some dilly-dallying, I finally decided against it because marriage had increased my responsibilities and I had got into debt.

- ‘decided’
- ‘had increased’ ‘had got’ -- **Past Perfect Tense**

Normally, when the time relation is unambiguous (by the use of before, after, because, etc) the simple past (past perfect is optional) is used to refer to both past actions.

4. On my way home from the bus stop my trunk had been carried by a porter. (Paragraph 3)

- Had been carried - **Past Perfect Tense**

When two actions in the past are clearly separated by time, the earlier action is expressed in the past perfect tense.

5. A large crowd gathered at our place the day I was to leave. People had come to wish me luck. (Paragraph 6)

- ‘gathered’ ‘was’
- ‘had come -- **Past Perfect Tense**

When two actions in the past are clearly separated by time, the earlier action is expressed in the past perfect tense.

6. Father was quiet for some time. He thoughtfully looked at the sun for a moment, and then his eyes fell on the can of home-made wine that I was carrying. (Paragraph 9)

- ‘was’ ‘looked’ ‘fell’
- ‘was carrying – Past Continuous

When two actions in the past happen simultaneously, both of them are expressed in the past tense.

7. I gave him the can of wine. He poured himself a mug and handed me the can. He drank all of it at one go. He then arranged the belt that was attached to the trunk carefully on his forehead. (Paragraph 10)

- ‘gave’ ‘poured’ ‘handed’ ‘drank’ ‘arranged’
- ‘was attached’ – simple past passive

When two actions in the past happen simultaneously, both of them are expressed in the past tense.

8. I had never got used to physical labour having stayed in hostels right from childhood. (Paragraph 11)

- ‘had never got used’ -- Past Perfect Tense
- ‘stayed’ – Simple Past

When two actions in the past are clearly separated by time, the earlier action is expressed in the past perfect tense.

9. His feet had developed cracks and somehow resembled those of an elephant. (Paragraph 14)

- ‘had developed’ -- Past Perfect Tense
- Resembled’ --

10. I noticed this for the first time. I hadn’t noticed that the road was uneven. (Paragraph 14)

- ‘noticed’ ‘was
- ‘hadn’t noticed’ -- Past Perfect Tense

When two actions in the past are clearly separated by time, the earlier action is expressed in the past perfect tense.

11. I checked my wallet and I saw I still had around Rs. 40 with me.
(Paragraph 14)

- ‘checked’ ‘saw’
- ‘still had’ -- **Past Perfect Tense**

When two actions in the past are clearly separated by time, the earlier action is expressed in the past perfect tense.

12. I then took out my pair of leather shoes from the trunk, and noticed my father’s face lighting up with contentment. (Paragraph 15)

- ‘took’ ‘noticed’ – Simple Past

When two actions in the past happen simultaneously, both of them are expressed in the past tense.

13. I saw that the road we had come by looked like a giant motionless rope. (Paragraph 16)

- ‘saw’ ‘looked’ – simple past
- ‘had come’ -- **Past Perfect Tense**

When two actions in the past are clearly separated by time, the earlier action is expressed in the past perfect tense.

14. He stopped his business after he became old.

- ‘stopped’ ‘became’ – simple past

When two actions in the past happen simultaneously, both of them are expressed in the past tense.

15. I had never eaten ‘haleem’ before I visited Hyderabad.

- ‘visited’ – simple past
- ‘had never eaten’ – **Past Perfect Tense**

When two actions in the past are clearly separated by time, the earlier action is expressed in the past perfect tense.