Past Perfect Continuous

Positive	Negative	Question
- I had been listening. - You had been listening. - He had been listening. - She had been listening. - It had been listening. - We had been listening. - You had been listening. - They had been listening.	- I had not been listening. - You had not been listening. - He had not been listening. - She had not been listening. - It had not been listening. - We had not been listening. - You had not been listening. - They had not been listening.	- Had I been listening? - Had you been listening? - Had he been listening? - Had she been listening? - Had it been listening? - Had we been listening? - Had you been listening? - Had they been listening?

Note: when speaking we use the contractions (or short forms)

I had = I'd // you had = you'd // he had = he'd // she had = she'd

it had = it'd // we had = we'd // you had = you'd // they had = they'd

had not = hadn't

We also use contractions for informal writing like emails to friends and colleagues. When you write a formal text, like a job application letter, you MUST use full forms.

When speaking we also say things like:

Our cat'd been acting strangely.
John'd been looking for a job for months.
The house'd been falling down for years.

But you should not write these as contractions.

USE 1 Duration Before Something in the Past

We use the Past Perfect Continuous to show that something started in the past and continued up until another time in the past. "For five minutes" and "for two weeks" are both durations which can be used with the Past Perfect Continuous. Notice that this is related to the [Present Perfect Continuous](http://www.englishpage.com); however, the duration does not continue until now, it stops before something else in the past.

- They had been talking for over an hour before Tony arrived.
- She had been working at that company for three years when it went out of business.
- How long had you been waiting to get on the bus?
- Mike wanted to sit down because he had been standing all day at work.
- James had been teaching at the university for more than a year before he left for Asia.
- A: How long had you been studying Turkish before you moved to Ankara?
  B: I had not been studying Turkish very long.

USE 2 Cause of Something in the Past

Using the Past Perfect Continuous before another action in the past is a good way to show cause and effect.

- Jason was tired because he had been jogging.
- Sam gained weight because he had been overeating.
- Betty failed the final test because she had not been attending class.

Past Continuous vs. Past Perfect Continuous

If you do not include a duration such as "for five minutes," "for two weeks" or "since Friday," many English speakers choose to use the Past Continuous rather than the Past Perfect Continuous. Be careful because this can change the meaning of the sentence. Past Continuous emphasises interrupted actions, whereas Past Perfect Continuous emphasises a duration of time before something in the past. Study the examples below to understand the difference.

- **He was tired because he was exercising so hard.**
  This sentence emphasises that he was tired because he was exercising at that exact moment.

- **He was tired because he had been exercising so hard.**
  This sentence emphasises that he was tired because he had been exercising over a period of time. It is possible that he was still exercising at that moment OR that he had just finished.

REMEMBER Non-Continuous Verbs / Mixed Verbs

It is important to remember that Non-Continuous Verbs (also known as state or stative verbs) cannot be used in any continuous tenses. Also, certain non-continuous meanings for Mixed Verbs cannot be used in continuous tenses. Instead of using Past Perfect Continuous with these verbs, you must use Past Perfect.

- The motorcycle had been belonging to George for years before Tina bought it. **Not Correct**
- The motorcycle had belonged to George for years before Tina bought it. **Correct**

ADVERB PLACEMENT

The examples below show the placement for grammar adverbs such as: always, only, never, ever, still, just, etc.

You had only been waiting there for a few minutes when she arrived.

Had you only been waiting there for a few minutes when she arrived?

ACTIVE / PASSIVE

- Chef Jones had been preparing the restaurant's fantastic dinners for two years before he moved to Paris. Active

- The restaurant's fantastic dinners had been being prepared by Chef Jones for two years before he moved to Paris. Passive

NOTE: Passive forms of the Past Perfect Continuous are not common.

Go here http://www.englishpage.com/verbpage/pastperfectcontinuous.html & here http://www.perfect-english-grammar.com/grammar-exercises.html to do exercises.