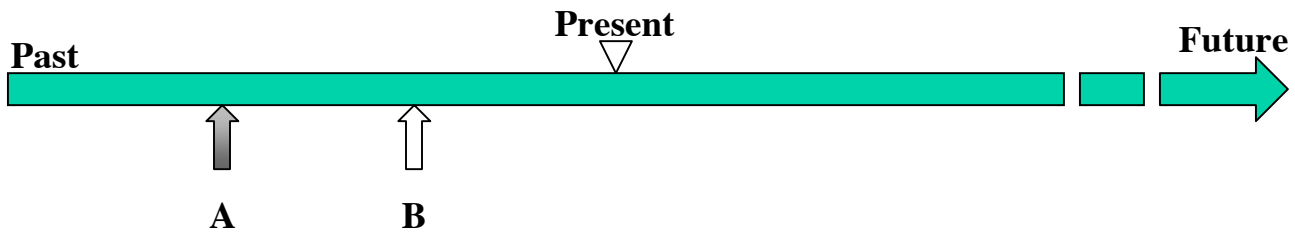


The Meaning of the Past Perfect

◆ Basic Meanings of the past perfect are

Earlier Past and *Completed in the Past*.

You go back to earlier past (A) when your focus is on something that happened in past (B). The past perfect clarifies the order of the two events in the past, (A) and (B). [(A) happened or completed *before* (B).]



They *had* already *eaten* everything *when* I *arrived*.

(A) (B)
(Event (A) happened **before** event (B) happened.)

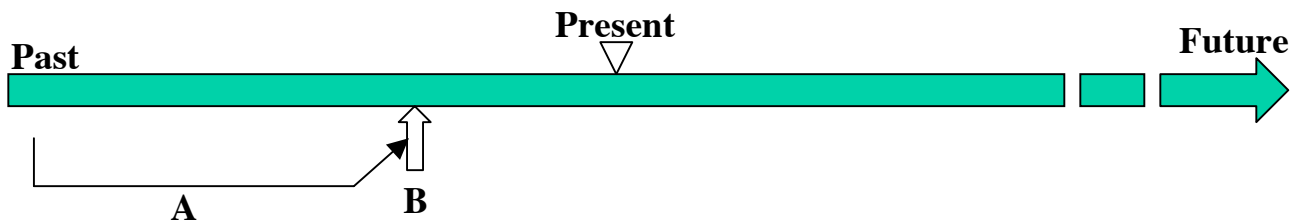
cf. They ate everything *when* I *arrived*.

(A) (B)
(Event (A) happened immediately **after** event (B) happened.)

I *thought* I *had made* many mistakes the day before.

(B) (A)

◆ The Past Perfect Progressive usually emphasizes the continuation of an activity, not the completion.



I *had been waiting* for him for more than 2 hours *when* he *arrived*.

(A) (B)



If a time conjunction such as *after* and *before* is used in a sentence, the past perfect is not necessary.

After she *finished* her homework, she *went* to the mall. =

After she *had finished* her homework, she *went* to the mall.