

Activity Type

Grammar and Speaking
Game: forming sentences
from prompts, freer
practice (group work)

Focus

Past perfect continuous

Past simple

Aim

To play a game where
you combine past perfect
continuous and past
simple sentence halves
together with *when* to
make logical sentences.

Preparation

Make one copy of the
two sets of cards for
each group of three or
four. Cut the cards out as
indicated, keeping each
set separate.

Level

Upper-intermediate (B2)

Time

20 minutes

Introduction

In this engaging past perfect continuous activity, students play a pelmanism style game where they combine past perfect continuous and past simple sentence halves together with *when* to make logical sentences.

Procedure

Divide the students into groups of three or four.

Give each group a set of past perfect continuous cards and a set of past simple cards.

Ask the students to shuffle each set of cards separately and then spread them out face-down on the table in two sets.

The aim of the game is to make logical sentences, combining a past perfect continuous sentence half card and a past simple sentence half card with the word *when*. The student who makes the most logical sentences from the cards wins the game.

Students take it in turns to turn over one card from each set.

If a student can combine the two sentence halves with *when* to make a logical sentence, the student keeps the two cards and scores a point, e.g. 'He hadn't been riding the elephant for long when it suddenly started raining hard'.

If a logical sentence cannot be made, the student turns the cards back over, keeping them in the same place.

Group members can challenge another student if they think a sentence is wrong.

If a student can justify their answer, they score the point. If not, no points are awarded.


Students should try to remember the location of the sentence halves as this will help them make more sentences.

The game continues until all the cards have been matched.

If a few cards remain that cannot be combined together, students can add to each sentence half with their own ideas.

So, if a remaining sentence half uses the past perfect continuous, the student completes the sentence with *when* and a past simple sentence half of their own, or vice versa.

The student with the most points at the end of the game is the winner.

Past Perfect Continuous Cards

He hadn't been riding the elephant for long...

The baby had been crying for about 15 minutes...

He had been texting...

They had been studying all morning...

She had been studying English for three years...

We had been waiting in the wrong line for 20 minutes...

They had been working for over an hour...

We hadn't been expecting them...

My friends and I hadn't been listening to music for long...

She had been training for almost a year...

They had been walking in the mountains for a while...

The passengers had been waiting for almost three hours...

She had been cooking in the kitchen for hours...

I had been travelling through Asia for a month...

I had been sleeping...

The dog had been barking for over an hour...

She had been working at the company for five years...

It had been raining all day...

The film had been playing for 30 minutes...

I hadn't been flying for long...

Past Simple Cards



...it suddenly started raining hard.	...his mother woke up.
...the car crashed into a tree.	...they decided to take a break.
...she went to Australia on holiday.	...we realized our mistake.
...I arrived at the factory.	...they suddenly appeared.
...there was a loud knock at the door.	...she got her chance to compete.
...the earthquake happened.	...the plane finally took off.
...we got home.	...I met my girlfriend.
...the alarm went off.	...my neighbour finally let him in.
...she got promoted.	...the sun came out.
...they arrived.	...one of the airplane engines caught fire.