B2 — Interview ready

Focus: Mastering the present tense aspects [Continuation of "B2 — Untangling the perfect tense aspects]"

Lesson focus

Using:

- Present perfect simple,

- Present perfect continuous,

- Past perfect simple,

- Past perfect continuous,

… accurately and confidently in a job interview context.

Core rule: State verbs and perfect continuous

Key rule: Perfect continuous tenses (have been doing / had been doing) are **generally NOT used with state verbs.**

State verbs describe:

- Thoughts: *know, believe, understand*
- Emotion: *love,hate, prefer*
- Possession: *have, own*
- Senses: *see, hear*
- Conditions: *be, seem, appear*

Incorrect:
"I have been knowing the client for years."
"She had been believing the project would succeed."
Correct:
"I have known the client for years"
"She had believed the project would succeed."

Why?

Perfect continuous focuses on **duration of action.**

State verbs describe a condition, not an action. They do not **"flow"** over time in the same way.

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Tense overview

Present Perfect Simple

Structure: Subject + have/has + past participle

Use in interviews:

- Life experience
- Achievements
- Results that are still relevant now

Examples:

- *"I have managed international teams."*
- *"I have improved workflow efficiency by 20%."*
- *"I have worked in finance for eight years."*

Present Perfect Continuous

Structure: Subject + have/has + been + verb + -ing

Use in interviews:

- Duration
- Ongoing projects
- Temporary recent focus

Examples:

- *"I have been leading a cross-functional team for the past year."*
- *"I have been working on expanding our client base."*

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Tense overview

Past Perfect Simple

Structure: Subject + had + past participle

Use in interviews:

- Earlier past before another past event
- Background before a turning point

Examples:

- *"I had completed the certification before I applied for the role."*
- *"The company had already expanded when I joined."*

Timeline logic: Earlier Past → Past Event → Now

Past Perfect Continuous

Structure: Subject + had been + verb + -ing

Use in interviews:

- Duration before another past event
- Cause of a past result

Examples:

- *"I had been working there for five years before I was promoted."*
- *"I had been preparing for months before the audit took place."*

Same verb | Same core meaning | "work"

Present simple	General fact | Routine	*I work in marketing.*
Past simple	Finished action in the past.	*I worked in marketing.*
Future simple	Decision | Prediction about the future.	*I will work in marketing.*
Present continuous	Happening now | Temporary	*I am working in marketing.*
Past continuous	Was in progress at a past moment.	*I was working in marketing.*
Future continuous	Will be in progress at a future time.	*I will be working in marketing.*
Present perfect simple	Past action connected to now.	*I have worked in marketing.*
Past perfect simple	Earlier past before another past event.	*I had worked in marketing.*
Future perfect simple	Completed before a future time.	*I will have worked in marketing (for ten years by 2030).*
Present perfect continuous	Duration up to now.	*I have been working in marketing (for ten years).*
Past perfect continuous	Duration before a past event.	*I had been working in marketing (for ten years before I changed careers).*
Future perfect continuous	Duration before a future moment.	*I will have been working in marketing (for ten years by 2030).*

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Same verb | Same core meaning | "know"

Present simple	Current state	Fact	*I know the client well.*
Past simple	Finished state in the past.	*I knew the client years ago.*
Future simple	Future state.	*I will know the results tomorrow.*
Present continuous	**INCORRECT STANDARD USE**	***I am knowing the client.***
Past continuous	**INCORRECT STANDARD USE**	***I was knowing the client.***
Future continuous	**INCORRECT STANDARD USE**	***I will be knowing the client.***
Present perfect simple	Duration up to now.	*I have known the client for five years.*
Past perfect simple	Duration before another past event.	*I had known the client for years before we started working together.*
Future perfect simple	Duration completed before a future point.	*I will have known the client for ten years by 2030.*
Present perfect continuous	**INCORRECT STANDARD USE**	***I have been knowing the client for five years.***
Past perfect continuous	**INCORRECT STANDARD USE**	***I had been knowing the client for years before the merger.***
Future perfect continuous	**INCORRECT STANDARD USE**	***I will have been knowing the client for ten years by 2030.***

The Interview Scenario | *A Strong Candidate*

Lucia walked into the interview room confidently. She had prepared extensively for this opportunity.

"I have worked in digital marketing for over seven years," she began. *"During that time, I have managed several international campaigns."*

She continued, *"Before I joined my current company, I had worked for a smaller start-up where I learned to adapt quickly. By the time I left, I had been leading a team of five for nearly two years."*

"In my current position, I have been focusing on data-driven strategy. Recently, I have been developing automated systems to improve performance tracking."

She smiled. *"I believe these experiences have prepared me well for this role."*

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Comprehension questions
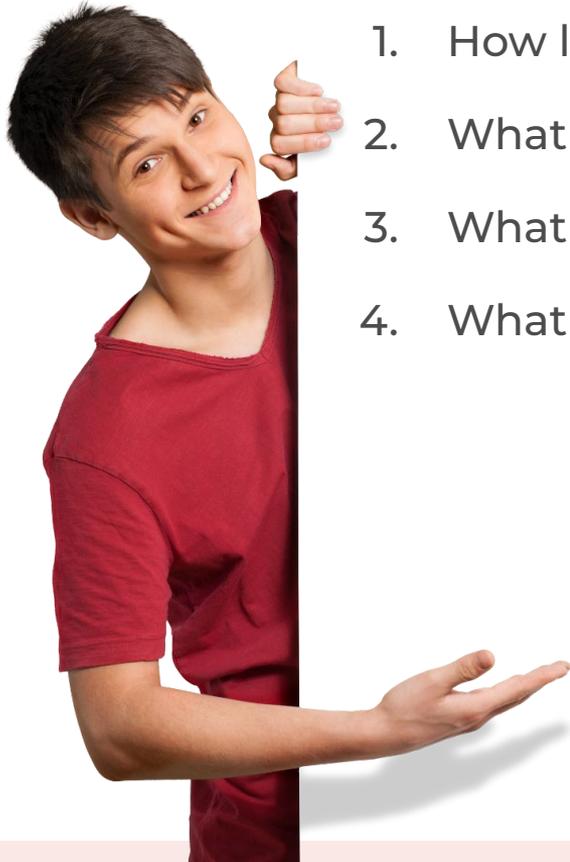
1. How long has Lucia worked in digital marketing?

2. What had she done before joining her current company?

3. What had she been doing before she left the start-up?

4. What has she been focusing on recently?

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Grammar analysis task

Identify the tense used in each sentence and explain why:

1. I have managed several campaigns.

2. I had worked for a smaller start-up.

3. I had been leading a team for two years.

4. I have been developing automated systems.

Gap fill activity

Choose the correct tense:

1. I _____ (work) in finance for ten years.

2. Before I moved to Berlin, I _____ (live) in Vienna.

3. I _____ (prepare) for this interview for the past week.

4. By the time the manager arrived, we _____ (wait) for over an hour.

5. I _____ (know) my current supervisor since 2018.

Error correction activity

Correct the mistakes:

1. I have been knowing the company for years.

2. I had worked there for five years before I have resigned.

3. I have been finishing the report yesterday.

4. I had been understanding the system before the training.

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Interview speaking practice

Task 1 — Professional Introduction

Answer using at least:

- 1 present perfect simple
- 1 present perfect continuous

Prompt:

"Can you tell me about your professional background?"

Task 2 — Turning Point Story

Use:

- Past perfect simple
- Past perfect continuous

Prompt:

"Tell me about a challenge you faced before receiving a promotion."

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"The Digital Marketing Pitch"

[Click here to listen to the conversation](#) (or scan the QR code, above)

*** *British accent*

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General comprehension

1. Where has Leo been working recently?

2. How long has he been managing social ads?

3. What had Leo done before joining his previous company?

4. What had he been doing for years before the rebranding opportunity arrived?

5. What new project is Sarah's company launching?

6. What strategy does Leo suggest integrating?

Tense identification

Listen again. Identify the tense used in the following extracts and explain why it is used.

1. *"You've been working in Shoreditch recently."*
2. *"I've been managing their social ads for six months."*
3. *"I had already launched three global campaigns."*
4. *"I'd been studying market trends for years."*
5. *"I've noticed you've focused heavily on organic growth."*
6. *"I had developed a tracking system."*
7. *"I've been refining that framework."*

For each sentence:

- Write the tense.
- Explain whether the focus is on result, duration, or earlier past.

Duration versus Result

Tick the correct focus:

Sentence	Duration	Result
I've been managing their social ads for six months.		
I had already launched three global campaigns.		
I'd been studying market trends for years.		
I've noticed you've focused heavily on organic growth.		
I've been refining that framework.		

Timeline task

Place the events in the correct chronological order (1 = earliest):

- Leo studies market trends

- Leo launches three global campaigns

- Leo joins the Shoreditch company

- Leo manages social ads for six months

- Sarah interviews Leo

Action verbs …

Past participle forms | Regular or Irregular | -ED ending pronunciation

Action verbs | past participles | pronunciation

Verb	Past participle	Regular / Irregular	-ED sound
work	worked	Regular	/t/
manage	managed	Regular	/d/
lead	led	Irregular	—
develop	developed	Regular	/t/
create	created	Regular	/ɪd/
build	built	Irregular	—
improve	improved	Regular	/d/
increase	increased	Regular	/t/
reduce	reduced	Regular	/t/
organise	organised	Regular	/d/

Action verbs | past participles | pronunciation

Verb	Past participle	Regular / Irregular	-ED sound
coordinate	coordinated	Regular	/ɪd/
implement	implemented	Regular	/ɪd/
design	designed	Regular	/d/
deliver	delivered	Regular	/d/
support	supported	Regular	/ɪd/
train	trained	Regular	/d/
negotiate	negotiated	Regular	/ɪd/
present	presented	Regular	/ɪd/
analyse	analysed	Regular	/d/
solve	solved	Regular	/d/

Action verbs | past participles | pronunciation

Verb	Past participle	Regular / Irregular	-ED sound
handle	handled	Regular	/d/
assist	assisted	Regular	/ɪd/
monitor	monitored	Regular	/d/
evaluate	evaluated	Regular	/ɪd/
expand	expanded	Regular	/ɪd/
establish	established	Regular	/t/
collaborate	collaborated	Regular	/ɪd/
launch	launched	Regular	/t/
supervise	supervised	Regular	/d/
optimise	optimised	Regular	/d/

Advanced impact verbs

Verb	Past participle	Regular / Irregular	-ED sound
spearhead	spearheaded	Regular	/ɪd/
initiate	initiated	Regular	/ɪd/
streamline	streamlined	Regular	/d/
facilitate	facilitated	Regular	/ɪd/
execute	executed	Regular	/ɪd/
transform	transformed	Regular	/d/
restructure	restructured	Regular	/d/
strengthen	strengthened	Regular	/d/
generate	generated	Regular	/ɪd/
secure	secured	Regular	/d/

Advanced impact verbs

Verb	Past participle	Regular / Irregular	-ED sound
oversee	oversaw	Irregular	—
enhance	enhanced	Regular	/t/
mentor	mentored	Regular	/d/
delegate	delegated	Regular	/ɪd/
adapt	adapted	Regular	/ɪd/

State verbs ...

Past participle forms | Regular or Irregular | -ED ending pronunciation

Action verbs | past participles | pronunciation

Verb	Past participle	Regular / Irregular	-ED sound
know	known	Irregular	—
believe	believed	Regular	/d/
understand	understood	Irregular	—
Think (opinion)	thought	Irregular	—
love	loved	Regular	/d/
hate	hated	Regular	/ɪd/
prefer	preferred	Regular	/d/
like	liked	Regular	/t/
own	owned	Regular	/d/
Have (possession)	had	Irregular	—

Action verbs | past participles | pronunciation

Verb	Past participle	Regular / Irregular	-ED sound
belong	belonged	Regular	/d/
seem	seemed	Regular	/d/
appear	appeared	Regular	/d/
need	needed	Regular	/ɪd/
want	wanted	Regular	/ɪd/
remember	remembered	Regular	/d/
forget	forgot	Irregular	—
recognise	recognised	Regular	/d/
contain	contained	Regular	/d/
include	included	Regular	/ɪd/

Action verbs | past participles | pronunciation

Verb	Past participle	Regular / Irregular	-ED sound
mean	meant	Irregular	—
depend	depended	Regular	/ɪd/
deserve	deserved	Regular	/d/
matter	mattered	Regular	/d/

Thank you for your support.

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