Past Perfect Tense

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:
• Identify past perfect tense verbs.
• Learn how to form past perfect tense verbs.
• Use past perfect tense verbs in sentences.

Preparation

Materials Needed
• Chart paper and markers
• Past Perfect Tense (BLM 4)
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation
If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling text and the practice text onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson. If necessary, copy the sentence frames and draw a three-column chart on chart paper for “Strategies to Support ELs.”

1. Focus

Explain Past Perfect Tense

Say: We know that past tense verbs tell us about something that happened in the past. Regular past tense verbs end in -ed. We also know that you have to memorize the spelling of irregular past tense verbs because they do not end in -ed. Verbs that show action that happened before a specific time in the past are called past perfect tense verbs. Let’s look at some examples of verbs in the past perfect tense.

Say: I’m going to write a few sentences from “The Lewis and Clark Expedition” that include verbs in the past perfect tense. I will then show you how the past perfect tense of each verb is formed and what it tells us.

Model Using Past Perfect Tense

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources, and read it aloud to students.

1. Before meeting Lewis and Clark, Patrick had been a carpenter.
2. The captains had decided that the men needed to eat.

Modeling Text

After sentence 1. Say: Past perfect verbs are formed by using had with the past participle of the verb. In the first sentence, the past perfect tense verb is had been. This is the past perfect form of the verb to be. The word had is placed in front of the word been, which is the past participle of the verb to be. Because to be is an irregular verb, the past participle (been) is spelled differently than the past tense (was). The verb had been tells me when Patrick was a carpenter. He was a carpenter before meeting Lewis and Clark. Before meeting Lewis and Clark is a specific time in the past.

After sentence 2. Say: I will also underline had decided in the second sentence. Decided is the past participle of the verb to decide. The past perfect tense of the verb is formed by placing the word had in front of decided. The captains’ decision that the men needed to eat was made before a specific time in the past. Writers use the past perfect tense in historical fiction to help readers understand when events happened in the past.
2. Rehearse

Practice Using Past Perfect Tense

Display the practice text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

Ask students to form pairs. Invite pairs to revise the practice sentences to include the past perfect tense of the verb in parentheses. (Students do not need to copy sentences.)

1. The horse (give) ______ its life to save theirs.
2. The men (repeat) ______ the order up and down the line.
3. Patrick marveled at how his life (change) ________.

Practice Text

If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

Share Sentences with Past Perfect Tense

Invite pairs to share their results. Discuss their responses. Ask the following questions:

• Sentence 1: How did you change give to the past perfect tense?
• Sentence 2: What is the past participle of repeat?
• Sentence 3: When did Patrick’s life change?

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that the past perfect tense of a verb tells us that an action happened before a specific time in the past. To form the past perfect tense of a verb, use the word had plus the past participle of the verb. Remember to use the past perfect tense when you write historical fiction to help your readers follow when events happened in the past.

If you would like to give students additional practice using the past perfect tense, have them complete BLM 4.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to read aloud their answers and the sentences they wrote on BLM 4. Use students’ answers to provide corrective feedback. Ask students to share what they learned about the past perfect tense.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Beginning ELs will need significant support to learn how to form the past perfect tense of verbs. Concentrate on one or two very common verbs they will need to use in oral language (e.g., eat/ate/eaten; do/did/done). Create a three-column chart with the column heads “Present,” “Past,” and “Past Perfect” and write the verb forms in the appropriate columns. Read the words with students and use them in sentences as you pantomime actions to build understanding. Examples are:

I eat my breakfast.
I ate my breakfast.
I had eaten my breakfast when the bus came.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers to complete the practice activity. Make sure that students understand the meaning of each sentence before they begin. Provide the following sentence frames to help students talk about past perfect tenses of verbs:

The past participle of the verb is ______.
The past perfect tense of the verb is ______.