socrative
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Name _____
Date _____

✏ELTE Past tenses quiz 231↩

Score _____

1. The roads were extremely slippery because it _____ heavily throughout the night.

(A) had rained
(B) had been raining
(C) was raining
(D) rained

2. I _____ the proposal twice before I finally noticed the serious error in the final paragraph.

(A) was reading
(B) have read
(C) had read
(D) had been read

3. When the manager entered the room, the employees _____ a heated discussion about the new policy.

(A) had had
(B) have had
(C) had
(D) were having

4. They _____ for hours before they finally reached an agreement.

(A) negotiated
(B) had been negotiating
(C) were negotiating
(D) have negotiated

5. The scientist realized that someone _____ the experimental results before the report was published.

(A) was altering

(B) has altered

(C) altered

(D) had altered

6. I _____ to contact you several times before I eventually managed to get through.

(A) had tried

(B) was trying

(C) tried

(D) had been tried

7. As soon as she _____ the email, she realized that she had accidentally sent it to the wrong person.

(A) had been sending

(B) was sending

(C) had sent

(D) sent

8. By the time the investigation began, the journalist _____ several confidential sources.

(A) was interviewing

(B) has interviewed

(C) had interviewed

(D) interviewed

9. I _____ through the old photographs when I suddenly recognized a familiar face.

(A) was looking

(B) had looked

(C) looked

(D) had been looked

10. She was exhausted because she _____ on the report for nearly twelve hours without a break.

(A) worked

(B) had worked

(C) was working

(D) had been working

11. When we arrived at the theatre, the performance _____ already _____.

(A) was / starting

(B) had / started

(C) did / start

(D) has / started

12. He _____ the company for ten years before he decided to establish his own business.

(A) has worked for

(B) had worked for

(C) was working for

(D) had been worked for

13. While the researchers _____ the data, they discovered an unexpected pattern.

(A) had analyzed

(B) analyzed

(C) had been analyzed

(D) were analyzing

14. She couldn't remember where she had put the keys because she _____ several things at the same time.

(A) did

(B) was done

(C) had been doing

(D) has been doing

15. By the end of the conference, the delegates _____ several controversial issues.

(A) were discussing

(B) have discussed

(C) discussed

(D) had discussed

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Answer Key
September 25, 2026

✏ELTE Past tenses quiz 231↩

1. The roads were extremely slippery because it _____ heavily throughout the night.

A had rained

✓ B had been raining

C was raining

D rained

i The rain continued for a period of time before the roads were observed to be slippery. The past perfect continuous emphasizes both the activity and its duration.

2. I _____ the proposal twice before I finally noticed the serious error in the final paragraph.

A was reading

B have read

✓ C had read

D had been read

i The two readings happened before the later realization. Since the action was completed before another past event, we use the past perfect.

3. When the manager entered the room, the employees _____ a heated discussion about the new policy.

A had had

B have had

C had

✓ D were having

i The discussion was already in progress when the manager entered. This requires the past continuous: were having.

4. They _____ for hours before they finally reached an agreement.

A negotiated

✓ B had been negotiating

C were negotiating

D have negotiated

i For hours highlights the duration of the activity before they reached an agreement. The past perfect continuous is therefore the most appropriate tense.

5. The scientist realized that someone _____ the experimental results before the report was published.

A was altering

B has altered

C altered

✓ D had altered

i The alteration occurred before the scientist realized it and before the report was published. The past perfect clearly establishes this sequence.

6. I _____ to contact you several times before I eventually managed to get through.

✓ A had tried

B was trying

C tried

D had been tried

i The attempts occurred before the successful contact. The past perfect is used because the attempts happened earlier than another past event.

7. As soon as she _____ the email, she realized that she had accidentally sent it to the wrong person.

A had been sending

B was sending

C had sent

✓ D sent

i With as soon as, the past simple is normally used to describe a completed action followed immediately by another past action: she sent the email → she realized her mistake.

8. By the time the investigation began, the journalist _____ several confidential sources.

A was interviewing

B has interviewed

✓ C had interviewed

D interviewed

i The interviews were completed before the investigation began. We use the past perfect (had + past participle) to show that one past action happened before another past action.

9. I _____ through the old photographs when I suddenly recognized a familiar face.

✓ **A** was looking

B had looked

C looked

D had been looked

i The action of looking at the photographs was in progress when the shorter action (recognized) occurred. Therefore, we use the past continuous.

10. She was exhausted because she _____ on the report for nearly twelve hours without a break.

A worked

B had worked

C was working

✓ **D** had been working

i The past perfect continuous emphasizes the duration of an activity before a particular point in the past. The twelve-hour activity explains why she was exhausted.

11. When we arrived at the theatre, the performance _____ already _____.

A was / starting

✓ **B** had / started

C did / start

D has / started

i The performance started before we arrived. The past perfect (had started) establishes this earlier past action.

12. He _____ the company for ten years before he decided to establish his own business.

A has worked for

✓ **B** had worked for

C was working for

D had been worked for

i His employment happened before the later decision to establish his own business. The past perfect shows the earlier situation. For ten years indicates its duration.

13. While the researchers _____ the data, they discovered an unexpected pattern.

A had analyzed

B analyzed

C had been analyzed

✓ D were analyzing

i The analysis was in progress when the researchers discovered the pattern. The past continuous is used for the longer action interrupted or accompanied by a shorter past event.

14. She couldn't remember where she had put the keys because she _____ several things at the same time.

A did

B was done

✓ C had been doing

D has been doing

i The multitasking had been taking place before the moment when she couldn't remember. The past perfect continuous emphasizes the ongoing activity leading up to that past situation.

15. By the end of the conference, the delegates _____ several controversial issues.

A were discussing

B have discussed

C discussed

✓ D had discussed

i By the end of the conference refers to a completed point in the past. The discussions had taken place by that point, so we use the past perfect.