Present perfect continuous and simple
(I have been doing and I have done)

Study this example situation:

There is paint on Kate’s clothes. She has been painting her bedroom. Has been painting is the present perfect continuous. We are thinking of the activity. It does not matter whether it has been finished or not. In this example, the activity (painting the bedroom) has not been finished.

Her bedroom was green. Now it is yellow. She has painted her bedroom. Has painted is the present perfect simple. Here, the important thing is that something has been finished. Has painted is a completed action. We are interested in the result of the activity (the painted bedroom), not the activity itself.

Compare these examples:

A
- My hands are very dirty. I’ve been repairing my bike.
- Joe has been eating too much recently. He should eat less.
- It’s nice to see you again. What have you been doing since we last met?
- Where have you been? Have you been playing tennis?

B
- My bike is OK again now. I’ve repaired it.
- Somebody has eaten all the chocolates. The box is empty.
- Where’s the book I gave you? What have you done with it?
- Have you ever played tennis?

C
- We use the continuous to say how long (for something that is still happening):
  - How long have you been reading that book?
  - Lisa is writing emails. She’s been writing emails all morning.
  - They’ve been playing tennis since 2 o’clock.
  - I’m learning Arabic, but I haven’t been learning it very long.

- We use the simple to say how much, how many or how many times:
  - How much of that book have you read?
  - Lisa is writing emails. She’s sent lots of emails this morning.
  - They’ve played tennis three times this week.
  - I’m learning Arabic, but I haven’t learnt very much yet.

D
- Some verbs (for example, know/like/believe) are not normally used in the continuous:
  - I’ve known about the problem for a long time. (not I’ve been knowing)
  - How long have you had that camera? (not have you been having)

  For a list of these verbs, see Unit 4A. For have, see Unit 17.

  But note that you can use want and mean in the present perfect continuous:
  - I’ve been meaning to phone Jane, but I keep forgetting.
Exercises

10.1 Read the situation and complete the sentences. Use the verbs in brackets.

1. Tom started reading a book two hours ago. He is still reading it and now he is on page 53.
   - He has been reading for two hours. (read)
   - He has read 53 pages so far. (read)

2. Rachel is from Australia. She is travelling round Europe at the moment. She began her trip three months ago.
   - She has been travelling for three months. (travel)
   - She has visited six countries so far. (visit)

3. Patrick is a tennis player. He began playing tennis when he was ten years old. This year he won the national championship again – for the fourth time.
   - He has won the national championship four times. (win)
   - He has played since he was ten. (play)

4. When they left college, Lisa and Sue started making films together. They still make films.
   - They have made five films since they left college. (make)

10.2 For each situation, ask a question using the words in brackets.

1. You have a friend who is learning Arabic. You ask:
   - How long have you been learning Arabic?

2. You have just arrived to meet a friend. She is waiting for you. You ask:
   - Have you waited long?

3. You see somebody fishing by the river. You ask:
   - Have you caught any fish?

4. Some friends of yours are having a party next week. You ask:
   - How many people are invited?

5. A friend of yours is a teacher. You ask:
   - How long have you been teaching?

6. You meet somebody who is a writer. You ask:
   - How many books have you written?
   - How long have you been writing books?

7. A friend of yours is saving money to go on a world trip. You ask:
   - How much money have you saved?
   - How long have you been saving money?

10.3 Put the verb into the more suitable form, present perfect simple (I have done) or continuous (I have been doing).

1. Where have you been? Have you been playing (you / play) tennis?

2. Look! Somebody (break) that window.

3. You look tired. You (work) hard?

4. ‘Liz is away on holiday.’ ‘Is she? Where (she / go)?’

5. ‘Sorry I’m late.’ ‘That’s all right. (I / not / wait) long.’

6. My brother is an actor. He (appear) in several films.

7. ‘Is it still raining?’ ‘No, (it / stop).’

8. ‘I’m sorry, I lost my phone.’ ‘(I / not / see) it anywhere?’

9. ‘I read the book you lent me, but (I / not / finish) it yet. It’s very interesting.

10. ‘I read the book you lent me, so you can have it back now.

11. ‘I have it since I was a child.

21
How long have you (been) ...?

Study this example situation:

Dan and Jenny are married. They got married exactly 20 years ago, so today is their 20th wedding anniversary.

They have been married for 20 years.
We say: They are married. (present)

but How long have they been married? (present perfect)
(not How long are they married?)
They have been married for 20 years.
(not They are married for 20 years)

We use the present perfect to talk about something that began in the past and still continues now.

Compare the present and the present perfect:

- Paul is in hospital.
- He’s been in hospital since Monday. (= He has been ...)
  (not Paul is in hospital since Monday)
- Do you know each other well?
- Have you known each other for a long time?
  (not Do you know)
- She’s waiting for somebody.
- She’s been waiting all morning.
- Do they have a car?
- How long have they had their car?

I have known/had/lived etc. is the present perfect simple.

I have been learning / been waiting / been doing etc. is the present perfect continuous.

When we ask or say ‘how long’, the continuous is more usual (see Unit 10):

- I’ve been learning English for six months.
- It’s been raining since lunchtime.
- Richard has been doing the same job for 20 years.
- ‘How long have you been driving?’ ‘Since I was 17.’

Some verbs (for example, know/like/believe) are not normally used in the continuous:

- How long have you known Jane? (not have you been knowing)
- I’ve had a pain in my stomach all day. (not I’ve been having)

See also Units 4A and 10C. For have, see Unit 17.

You can use either the present perfect continuous or simple with live and work:

- Julia has been living / has lived here for a long time.
- How long have you been working / have you worked here?

But use the simple (I’ve lived / I’ve done etc.) with always:

- I’ve always lived in the country. (not always been living)

We say ‘I haven’t done something since/for ...’ (present perfect simple):

- I haven’t seen Tom since Monday. (= Monday was the last time I saw him)
- Sarah hasn’t phoned for ages. (= the last time she phoned was ages ago)
Exercises

11.1 Are the underlined verbs right or wrong? Correct them where necessary.

1. Ben is a friend of mine. I know him very well. 
   OK
   I've known him

2. Ben is a friend of mine. I know him for a long time.
   OK
   I’ve known him

3. Sarah and Adam are married since July.
   OK

4. The weather is awful. It’s raining again.
   OK
   It’s raining all day.

5. I like your house. How long are you living there?
   OK

6. I gave up drinking coffee. I don’t drink it for a year.
   OK

7. That’s a very old bike. How long do you have it?
   OK

11.2 Read the situations and write questions from the words in brackets.

1. A friend tells you that Paul is in hospital. You ask him:
   (how long / be / in hospital?)
   How long has Paul been in hospital?

2. You meet a woman who tells you that she teaches English. You ask her:
   (how long / teach / English?)
   How long have you been teaching English?

3. You know that Jane is a good friend of Katherine’s. You ask Jane:
   (how long / know / Katherine?)
   How long have you known Katherine?

4. Your friend’s brother went to Australia some time ago and he’s still there. You ask your friend:
   (how long / be / in Australia?)
   How long has your brother been in Australia?

5. Tom always wears the same jacket. It’s a very old jacket. You ask him:
   (how long / have / that jacket?)
   How long have you had that jacket?

6. You are talking to a friend about Joe. Joe now works at the airport. You ask your friend:
   (how long / work / at the airport?)
   How long have you worked at the airport?

7. A friend of yours is having guitar lessons. You ask him:
   (how long / have / guitar lessons?)
   How long have you had guitar lessons?

8. You meet somebody on a plane. She says that she lives in Chicago. You ask her:
   (always / live / in Chicago?)
   Have you always lived in Chicago?

11.3 Complete B’s answers to A’s questions.

A  B
1. Paul is in hospital, isn’t he? Yes, he has been in hospital since Monday.
   No, I haven’t seen her for three months.

2. Do you see Ann very often? Yes, she married for ten years.
   No, I for the last half hour.

3. Is Amy married? Yes, we each other a long time.
   No, I tennis for years.

4. Are you waiting for me? Yes, he TV all evening.
   No, I TV for ages.

5. You know Mel, don’t you? Yes, I a headache all morning.
   No, he ill since I’ve known him.

6. Do you still play tennis? Yes, I in Berlin for the last few years.
   No, I to go to New York one day.

7. Is Joe watching TV? Yes, I at the airport.
   No, I to the cinema for ages.

8. Do you watch TV a lot? Yes, I to go to New York.
   No, I always / want)
For and since  When … ? and How long … ?

We use for and since to say how long something has been happening.

We use for + a period of time (two hours, six weeks etc.):
- I’ve been waiting for two hours.

We use since + the start of a period (8 o’clock, Monday, 1999 etc.):
- I’ve been waiting since 8 o’clock.

It is possible to leave out for (but not usually in negative sentences):
- They’ve been married (for) ten years.  (with or without for)
- They haven’t had a holiday for ten years.  (you must use for)

We do not use for + all … (all day / all my life etc.):
- I’ve lived here all my life.  (not for all my life)

You can use in instead of for in negative sentences (I haven’t … etc.):
- They haven’t had a holiday in ten years.  (= for ten years)

Compare when … ? (+ past simple) and how long … ? (+ present perfect):

A: When did it start raining?
B: It started raining an hour ago / at 1 o’clock.

A: How long has it been raining?
B: It’s been raining for an hour / since 1 o’clock.

A: When did Joe and Carol first meet?
B: They first met a long time ago, when they were at school.

A: How long have they known each other?
B: They’ve known each other for a long time, since they were at school.

We say:
- It’s or It’s been (= It is) a long time six months (etc.) since something happened
- six months (etc.) since something happened

- It’s two years since I last saw Joe.  or  It’s been two years since …
  (= I haven’t seen Joe for two years)
- It’s ages since we went to the cinema.  or  It’s been ages since …
  (= We haven’t been to the cinema for ages)
- How long is it since Mrs Hill died?  or  How long has it been since … ?
  (= When did Mrs Hill die?)

How long have you (been) … ?  ➔  Unit 11
Exercises

12.1 Write for or since.
1. It's been raining since lunchtime.
2. Sarah has lived in Paris since 1995.
3. Paul has lived in Brazil for ten years.
4. I'm tired of waiting. We've been sitting here for an hour.
5. Kevin has been looking for a job since he left school.
6. I haven't been to a party for ages.
7. I wonder where Joe is. I haven't seen him since last week.
8. Jane is away. She's been away since Friday.
9. The weather is dry. It hasn't rained for a few weeks.

12.2 Write questions with how long and when.
1. (how long?) How long has it been raining?
   (when?) When did it start raining?
2. (how long / learn?) Kate is learning Japanese. How long has she been learning it?
   (when / start?) When did she start learning it?
3. (how long / you / know?) I know Simon. How long have you known him?
   (when / you / first / meet?) When did you first meet him?
4. (how long?) Rebecca and David are married. How long have they been married?
   (when?) When did they get married?

12.3 Read the situations and complete the sentences.
1. It's raining. It's been raining since lunchtime. It started raining at lunchtime.
2. Ann and Jess are friends. They first met years ago. They've known each other for years.
3. Mark is ill. He became ill on Sunday. He has been ill since Sunday.
4. Mark is ill. He became ill a few days ago. He has been ill for a few days.
5. Sarah is married. She's been married for a year. She got married.
6. You have a headache. It started when you woke up. It started when you woke up.
7. Sue has been in Italy for the last three weeks. She went to Italy.
8. You're working in a hotel. You started six months ago. I've been working in the hotel.

12.4 Write B's sentences using the words in brackets.
1. (A) Do you often go on holiday?
   (B) No, I haven't had a holiday for five years.
2. (A) Do you often see Laura?
   (B) No, I haven't seen her for about a month.
3. (A) Do you often go to the cinema?
   (B) No, I haven't been to the cinema for a long time.
4. (A) Do you often eat in restaurants?
   (B) No, I haven't eaten in a restaurant for ages.

Now write B's answers again. This time use It's … since ….
5. (1) No, it's five years since I had a holiday.
6. (2) No, it's...
7. (3) No, it's...
8. (4) No, it's...
Present perfect and past 1 (I have done and I did)

Study this example situation:

Tom is looking for his key. He can’t find it.
He has lost his key. (present perfect)
This means that he doesn’t have his key now.

Ten minutes later:

Now Tom has found his key. He has it now.
Has he lost his key? No, he has found it.
Did he lose his key? Yes, he did.
He lost his key (past simple)
but now he has found it. (present perfect)

The present perfect (something has happened) is a present tense. It always tells us about the situation now. ‘Tom has lost his key’ = he doesn’t have his key now (see Unit 7).

The past simple (something happened) tells us only about the past. If somebody says ‘Tom lost his key’, this doesn’t tell us whether he has the key now or not. It tells us only that he lost his key at some time in the past.

Do not use the present perfect if the situation now is different. Compare:

- They’ve gone away. They’ll be back on Friday. (they are away now)
  They went away, but I think they’re back at home now. (not They’ve gone)
- It has stopped raining now, so we don’t need the umbrella. (it isn’t raining now)
  It stopped raining for a while, but now it’s raining again. (not It has stopped)

You can use the present perfect for new or recent happenings:

- I’ve repaired the washing machine. It’s working OK now.’ ‘Oh, that’s good.’
  ‘Sally has had a baby! It’s a boy.’ ‘That’s great news.’

Usually, you can also use the past simple:

- I repaired the washing machine. It’s working OK now.

Use the past simple (not the present perfect) for things that are not recent or new:

- Mozart was a composer. He wrote more than 600 pieces of music. (not has been … has written)
- My mother grew up in Italy. (not has grown)

Compare:

- Did you know that somebody has invented a new type of washing machine?
  Who invented the telephone? (not has invented)

We use the present perfect to give new information (see Unit 7). But if we continue to talk about it, we normally use the past simple:

- A: Ow! I’ve burnt myself.
  B: How did you do that? (not have you done)
  A: I picked up a hot dish. (not have picked)
- A: Look! Somebody has splilt something on the sofa.
  B: Well, it wasn’t me. I didn’t do it. (not hasn’t been … haven’t done)
Exercises

13.1 Complete the sentences using the verbs in brackets. Use the present perfect where possible. Otherwise use the past simple.

1. I can't get in. I've lost my key.

2. The office is empty now. Everybody has gone home.

3. I meant to call you last night, but I forgot.

4. Helen is going to Egypt for a holiday, but she's back home in England now.

5. Are you OK? Yes, I have a headache, but I'm fine now.

6. Can you help us? Our car has broken down.

13.2 Are the underlined parts of these sentences right or wrong? Correct them where necessary.

1. Did you hear about Sue? She's given up her job. OK

2. My mother has grown up in Italy. grew

3. How many poems has William Shakespeare written? has

4. Ow! I've cut my finger. It's bleeding.

5. Drugs have become a big problem everywhere.

6. Who has invented paper?

7. Where have you been born?

8. Ellie isn't at home. She's gone shopping.

9. Albert Einstein has been the scientist who has developed the theory of relativity.

13.3 Put the verb into the correct form, present perfect or past simple.

1. It stopped raining for a while, but now it's raining again. (it / stop)

2. The town where I live is very different now. It has changed a lot. (it / change)

3. I studied German at school, but most of it now. (I / forget)

4. The police arrested three people, but later they let them go. (arrest)

5. What do you think of my English? Do you think it has improved? (it / improve)

6. a: Are you still reading the paper?
   b: No, with it. You can have it. (I / finish)

7. for a job as a tourist guide, but I wasn't successful. (I / apply)

8. Where's my bike? outside the house, but it's not there now. (it / be)

9. Quick! We need to call an ambulance. an accident. (there / be)

10. a: Have you heard about Ben? off a ladder. (he / fall)
    b: Really? How ? (that / happen)
Present perfect and past 2 (I have done and I did)

Do not use the present perfect (I have done) when you talk about a finished time (for example, yesterday / ten minutes ago / in 2005 / when I was a child). Use a past tense:

- It was very cold yesterday.  (not has been)
- Paul and Lucy arrived ten minutes ago.  (not have arrived)
- Did you eat a lot of sweets when you were a child?  (not have you eaten)
- I got home late last night.  I was very tired and went straight to bed.

Use the past to ask When … ? or What time … ?:

- When did your friends arrive?  (not have … arrived)
- What time did you finish work?

Compare:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present perfect</th>
<th>Past simple</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tom has lost his key.</td>
<td>Tom lost his key</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He can’t get into the house.</td>
<td>yesterday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is Carla here or has she left?</td>
<td>He couldn’t get into the house.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present perfect (have done)</th>
<th>Past simple (did)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’ve done a lot of work today.</td>
<td>I did a lot of work yesterday.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We use the present perfect for a period of time that continues until now. For example: today / this week / since 2007.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>past</th>
<th>now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It hasn’t rained this week.</td>
<td>It didn’t rain last week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you seen Anna this morning?</td>
<td>Did you see Anna this morning? (it is now afternoon or evening)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(it is still morning)</td>
<td>Did you see Tim on Sunday?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you seen Tim recently?</td>
<td>a: Was Lisa at the party on Sunday?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know where Lisa is.</td>
<td>b: I don’t think so. I didn’t see her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I haven’t seen her recently)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We’ve been waiting for an hour. (we are still waiting now)</td>
<td>We waited (or were waiting) for an hour. (we are no longer waiting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack lives in Los Angeles. He has lived there for seven years.</td>
<td>Jack lived in New York for ten years. Now he lives in Los Angeles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have never played golf. (in my life)</td>
<td>I didn’t play golf last summer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s the last day of your holiday. You say: It’s been a really good holiday. I’ve really enjoyed it.</td>
<td>After you come back from holiday you say: It was a really good holiday. I really enjoyed it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exercises

14.1 Are the underlined parts of these sentences right or wrong? Correct them where necessary.

1 I've lost my key. I can't find it anywhere. OK
2 Have you eaten a lot of sweets when you were a child? Did you eat
3 I've bought a new car. You must come and see it.
4 I've bought a new car last week.
5 Where have you been yesterday evening?
6 Lucy has left school in 1999.
7 I'm looking for Mike. Have you seen him?
8 'Have you been to Paris?' 'Yes, many times.'
9 I'm very hungry. I haven't eaten much today.
10 When has this book been published?

14.2 Make sentences from the words in brackets. Use the present perfect or past simple.

1 (it / not / rain / this week) It hasn't rained this week.
2 (the weather / be / cold / recently) The weather
3 (it / cold / last week) It
4 (I / not / read / a newspaper yesterday) I
5 (I / not / read / a newspaper today)
6 (Emily / earn / a lot of money / this year)
7 (she / not / earn / so much / last year)
8 (you / have / a holiday recently?)

14.3 Put the verb into the correct form, present perfect or past simple.

1 ‘What’s Madrid like?’ ‘I don’t know. I haven’t been (I / not / be) there.’
2 When (I / get) home last night, (I / be) very tired and (I / go) straight to bed.
3 a: (you / see) Lisa recently?
   b: Yes, (I / saw) her a few days ago.
4 I'm tired. (I / not / sleep) well last night.
5 The bus drivers were on strike last week. (there / be) no buses.
6 Mr Lee (work) in a bank for 15 years. Then (he / give) it up. Now he works as a gardener.
7 Mary lives in Dublin. (she / live) there all her life.
8 a: (you / go) to the cinema last night?
    b: Yes, but (it / be) a mistake. The film (be) awful.
9 My grandfather (die) before I was born. (I / never / meet) him.
10 I don’t know Karen’s husband. (I / never / meet) him.
11 It’s nearly lunchtime, and (I / not / see) Martin all morning. I wonder where he is.
12 ‘Where do you live?’ ‘In Boston.’
   ‘How long (you / live) there?’ ‘Five years.’
   ‘Where (you / live) before that?’ ‘In Chicago.’
   ‘And how long (you / live) in Chicago?’ ‘Two years.’

14.4 Write sentences about yourself using the ideas in brackets.

1 (something you haven't done today) I haven't eaten any fruit today.
2 (something you haven't done today)
3 (something you didn't do yesterday)
4 (something you did yesterday evening)
5 (something you haven't done recently)
6 (something you’ve done a lot recently)
Study this example situation:

Sarah went to a party last week. Paul went to the party too, but they didn’t see each other. Paul left the party at 10.30 and Sarah arrived at 11 o’clock. So:

When Sarah arrived at the party, Paul wasn’t there.

He had gone home.

Had gone is the past perfect (simple):

I/we/they/you had (= I’d etc.)
he/she/it had (= he’d etc.)
gone

The past perfect simple is had + past participle (gone/seen/finished etc).

Sometimes we talk about something that happened in the past:

Sarah arrived at the party.

This is the starting point of the story. Then, if we want to talk about things that happened before this time, we use the past perfect (had …):

When Sarah arrived at the party, Paul had already gone home.

Some more examples:

- When we got home last night, we found that somebody had broken into the flat.
- Karen didn’t want to go to the cinema with us because she’d already seen the movie.
- At first I thought I’d done the right thing, but I soon realised that I’d made a big mistake.
- The man sitting next to me on the plane was very nervous. He hadn’t flown before.
- or … He had never flown before.

Compare the present perfect (have seen etc.) and the past perfect (had seen etc.):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present perfect</th>
<th>Past perfect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>have seen</td>
<td>had seen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past</td>
<td>past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>now</td>
<td>now</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Who is that woman? I’ve seen her before, but I can’t remember where.
- We aren’t hungry. We’ve just had lunch.
- The house is dirty. They haven’t cleaned it for weeks.

- I wasn’t sure who she was. I’d seen her before, but I couldn’t remember where.
- We weren’t hungry. We’d just had lunch.
- The house was dirty. They hadn’t cleaned it for weeks.

Compare the past simple (left, was etc.) and the past perfect (had left, had been etc.):

- A: Was Tom there when you arrived?  
  B: Yes, but he left soon afterwards.
- Kate wasn’t at home when I phoned. She was at her mother’s house.

- A: Was Tom there when you arrived?  
  B: No, he had already left.
- Kate had just got home when I phoned. She had been at her mother’s house.
Exercises

15.1 Read the situations and write sentences from the words in brackets.

1 You went to Sue's house, but she wasn't there.
   (she / go / out) _______. 
   She had gone out.

2 You went back to your home town after many years. It wasn't the same as before.
   (it / change / a lot) _______________________.

3 I invited Rachel to the party, but she couldn't come.
   (she / arrange / to do something else) _______________________.

4 You went to the cinema last night. You got to the cinema late.
   (the film / already / start) _______________________.

5 It was nice to see Daniel again after such a long time.
   (I / not / see / him for five years) _______________________.

6 I offered Sue something to eat, but she wasn't hungry.
   (she / just / have / breakfast) _______________________.

15.2 For each situation, write a sentence ending with never … before. Use the verb in brackets.

1 The man sitting next to you on the plane was very nervous. It was his first flight.
   (fly) He'd never flown before.

2 Somebody sang a song. I didn't know it.
   (hear) I had never heard it before.

3 Sam played tennis yesterday. He wasn't very good at it because it was his first game.
   (play) He had never played before.

4 Last year we went to Mexico. It was our first time there.
   (be there) We had never been there before.

15.3 Use the sentences on the left to complete the paragraphs on the right. These sentences are in the order in which they happened – so (a) happened before (b), (b) before (c) etc. But your paragraph begins with the underlined sentence, so sometimes you need the past perfect.

1 (a) Somebody broke into the office during the night.
    (b) We arrived at work in the morning and found that somebody had broken into the office during the night. So we called the police.

2 (a) Laura went out this morning.
    (b) I rang her doorbell, but there was no answer.

3 (a) Jim came back from holiday a few days ago.
    (b) I met him the same day.
    (c) He looked very well.

4 (a) Kevin sent Sally lots of emails.
    (b) She never replied to them.
    (c) Yesterday he got a phone call from her.
    (d) He was very surprised.

15.4 Put the verb into the correct form, past perfect (I had done) or past simple (I did).

1 'Was Paul at the party when you arrived?' ‘No, he had gone home.’

2 I felt very tired when I got home, so I went straight to bed.

3 The house was very quiet when I got home. Everybody had gone to bed.

4 Sorry I'm late. The car broke down on my way here.

5 We were driving along the road when we saw a car which had broken down, so we stopped to help.