

Title:

Learning Spanish and the Pluperfect Tense

Word Count:

783

Summary:

In this Spanish lesson, we will learn the Pluperfect Tense. Whether you are learning Spanish online, with CDs, or Learning Spanish software, you will find this lesson helpful in your journey to learn how to speak Spanish. For the most part, the Pluperfect Tense is used to express a past fact or action that occurred before another past action took place.

Keywords:

Learning Spanish Like Crazy

Article Body:

The Pluperfect Tense

In this Spanish lesson, we will learn the Pluperfect Tense. Whether you are learning Spanish online, with CDs, or Learning Spanish software, you will find this lesson helpful in your journey to learn how to speak Spanish.

For the most part, the Pluperfect Tense is used to express a past fact or action that occurred before another past action took place.

In English, this can be expressed in the following manner:

I had thought of you when you called.

Although in English we tend to use the preterite to express two consecutive actions in the past, in Spanish this is rarely the case. Instead, the Pluperfect Tense is used.

In Spanish, the above sentence is translated to:

Yo había pensado en usted cuando llamó.

Notice how the auxiliary verb haber (to have) is a prominent part of this tense, both in Spanish and in English. The main verb parallels the past participle.

Let us take a closer look at the conjugation for the Pluperfect Tense for -ar, -er, and -ir verbs in Spanish.

Trabajar (to work)

yo había trabajado (I had worked)
trabajado (we had worked)

nosotros habíamos

tú habías trabajado (you had worked)
had worked)

ellos habían trabajado (they

él había trabajado (he had worked)
(they had worked)

ellas habían trabajado

ella había trabajado (she had worked)
(you had worked)

ustedes habían trabajado

usted había trabajado (you had worked)

Notice how the conjugation for this tense is easily formed by adding -ía to haber --the auxiliary verb haber's stem. The past participle for the main verb is then added to complete the conjugation.

This conjugation format is repeated for -er and -ir verbs as well.

Comer (to eat)

yo había comido (I had eaten)
(we had eaten)

nosotros habíamos comido

tú habías comido (you had eaten)
had eaten)

ellos habían comido (they

él había comido (he had eaten)
(they had eaten)

ellas habían comido

ella había comido (she had eaten)
(you had eaten)

ustedes habían comido

usted había comido (you had eaten)

Salir (to go out)

yo había salido (I had gone out)
salido (we had gone out)

nosotros habíamos

tú habías salido (you had gone out)
had gone out)

ellos habían salido (they

él había salido (he had gone out)
(they had gone out)

ellas habían salido

ella había salido (she had gone out)
(you had gone out)

ustedes habían salido

usted había salido (you had gone out)

What follows are a few examples of the Pluperfect Tense in Spanish:

Yo había salido cuando el teléfono sonó.

(I had gone out when the telephone rang.)

Juan y yo ya habíamos cenado cuando Sra. Patricia nos ofreció comida.

(We had already had dinner when Mrs. Patricia offered us food.)

Mauricio había hablado con su papá cuando llegó su mamá.

(Mauricio had spoken to his father when his mother arrived.)

Roberto y Julio habían bebido ron antes de llegar a la fiesta.

(Roberto and Julio had drunk rum before they arrived at the party.)

Josefina no había dormido mucho antes de entrarse en el avión.

(Josefina had not slept a lot before she entered the airplane.)

Now let's try a few exercises. Translate the following into Spanish. The answers follow the exercise.

1. Clara had cleaned the house when her friends arrived.
2. I had practiced my Spanish before Juan called me.
3. We had eaten too much, when the dessert arrived.

4. Paco and Enrique had finished the exam when the bell rang.
5. You had changed your dollars to pesos before the bank closed.
6. They had gone to the beach before it rained.
7. Marisol and I had eaten breakfast before we went to school.
8. We had learned how to dance salsa before we traveled to Puerto Rico.
9. I had met Diego before he came here.
10. Humberto had written to Carmen when he received her letter.

1. Clara había limpiado la casa cuando llegaron sus amigas.
2. Yo había practicado mi Español antes de Juan llamarme.
3. Habíamos comido demasiado cuando llegó el postre.
4. Paco y Enrique habían terminado el examen cuando sonó la campana.
5. Tú habías cambiado tus dólares a pesos antes de cerrar el banco.
6. Ellos habían ido a la playa antes de llover.
7. Marisol y yo habíamos desayunado antes de ir a la escuela.
8. Habíamos aprendido como bailar la salsa antes de viajar a Puerto Rico.
9. Yo había conocido a Diego antes de venir él aquí.
10. Humberto le había escrito a Carmen cuando recibió su carta.