Past perfect vs past simple

10 practice questions • Padworth Learning Studio

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. By the time we arrived, the meeting ___ already ended.

has / had / was

My answer: _____

2. She opened her notebook and ___ the date.

writes / has written / wrote

My answer: _____

3. I could not log in because I ___ my password.

had forgotten / have forgotten / forget

My answer: _____

4. Which sentence clearly places the departure before our arrival?

When we arrived, he had left. / When we arrived, he leaves. / When we arrive, he left.

My answer: _____

5. At eight, I ___ my bag and left.

picked up / had been pick up / have picked up

My answer: _____

6. The train had left before we arrived. Which event was earlier?

The sentence does not indicate order. / The train left. / We arrived.

My answer: _____

7. She ___ the email and then closed her laptop.

sent / had send / has sent yesterday

My answer: _____

8. I recognised him because we ___ before.

have meet / will meet / had met

My answer: _____

9. After they had eaten, they ___ the dishes.

have washing / washed / had wash

My answer: _____

10. Choose the correct sentence.

By noon, we had finished the work. / By noon, we had finish the work. / By noon, we did finished the work.

My answer: _____

Answer key & explanations

1. **had** — By the time introduces the later past reference point.

2. **wrote** — Two events in sequence use the past simple.

3. **had forgotten** — Forgetting came before the failed past attempt.

4. **When we arrived, he had left.** — Had left explicitly marks the departure as earlier.

5. **picked up** — This moves the past narrative forward.

6. **The train left.** — Had left explicitly marks the departure as earlier than arrived.

7. **sent** — Past simple is natural for successive completed actions in a narrative.

8. **had met** — The meeting preceded the later recognition, so past perfect fits.

9. **washed** — Washed is the later past action; had eaten marks the earlier action.

10. **By noon, we had finished the work.** — Had takes the past participle finished. Did would take the base form finish.