Will
Hello, and welcome to today’s Grammar Gameshow! I’m your host, Will! The last document that ever matters! And of course let’s not forget Leslie, our all-knowing voice in the sky.

Leslie
Hello everyone!

Will
Tonight we’re going to ask you three questions about…

Leslie
The past perfect. That useful tense using ‘had’ and a past participle for talking about the past that’s past the past!

Will
OK! Now, let’s meet our contestants!

Mark
Hi, Will. My name’s Mark!

Will
And contestant number two?

Levington
Hello, everyone. I’m Levington!

Will
Welcome back, Levington. Win this one and you’ll be on a par with our last champion, Mya.

Levington
Really?! Where is she now?

Will
Oh, don’t worry about her. She’s squirreled away somewhere. Ok. Let’s get going and don’t
forget you can play along at home too. Our first round is a find the mistake round. Can you correct the mistake in each of these sentences? I didn’t eat by the time I had left home.

Mark
I hadn’t eaten by the time I left home.

Leslie
Correct!

Will
When I had arrived home, my sister already made lunch.

Levington
When I arrived home, my sister had already made lunch.

Leslie
Correct!

Will
I had woken up late because I forgot to set my alarm clock.

Mark
I woke up late because I’d forgotten to set my alarm clock.

Leslie
Correct!

Will
Leslie?

Leslie
Good job everyone! The past perfect describes actions that happened before the point in the past that we are currently speaking about. Once a time in the past has been set, it allows us to go back for a moment to a point before that. Events in the past perfect always take place before the past simple or past continuous.

Will
Well done! Have 23 points between you to be divided according to the day of the week and the strength of your personality. Let’s have a bonus question. Look at this sentence and tell me how the verb phrase ‘had had’ should be pronounced.

Mark
I had had a shower.
Will
Do it again.

Mark
I had had a shower.

Will
Sorry… I didn’t quite catch that. Try closing one eye and pulling your lips back.

Mark
Had had?

Will
One more time? Maybe hold your arms above your head.

Mark
Had had… had had?

Will
One for luck! Just lift your leg. A little higher… higher still.

Mark
Had had!

Will
Totally wrong I’m afraid. And your attempt to distract us with your weird body movements only makes things more embarrassing for you. What a shame. Levington?

Levington
I had had a shower.

Will
Well done! Leslie?

Leslie
When ‘had’ is pronounced as an auxiliary verb, it takes its weak form! If the main verb is also ‘had’, we pronounce the first one weak and the second one strong. I had had a great time.

Will
15 points for Levington. On to question two! The past perfect is formed with ‘had’ and a past participle verb, but in which other grammatical structure is the past perfect’s form required?
Levington
It’s got to be the past perfect continuous! ‘Had’ plus ‘been’ plus verbING

Will
A swing and a miss there Levington. Mark, would you like to give it a try?

Mark
No idea.

Will
Are you sure? If Levington had known the answer, he would have got the points!

Mark
A third conditional! It’s a third conditional.

Will
Leslie?

Leslie
Well done! The third conditional is used to talk about the possible consequences of past events that didn’t happen. Its formula uses the past perfect in the conditional clause. If + had + past participle, would + have + past participle.

Will
Well done! If Levington had given me the answer, I would have given him twenty points. But for you? Three!

Mark
But…

Will
On to our last question. The past perfect can also be used to talk about unrealised hopes. In this case, its pronunciation changes significantly. How?

Levington
Isn’t the auxiliary verb usually stressed instead of unstressed?

Will
Very good! Can you give me an example?

Levington
I had intended to just do my best, but now I want to beat Mya’s record!
**Will**
Good for you!, Mya was a lot more intelligent than you are…but people love an underdog! Leslie?

**Leslie**
Well done! The past perfect is often used to express unrealised hopes. Those are things we wanted but didn’t happen. Verbs like ‘wish’, ‘hope’, ‘intend’ and ‘want’ are common in this structure. We also usually stress the auxiliary verb.

**Will**
Well done Levington. Six points for you. I had hoped that I would be able to sleep the whole night through by now… but the dreams… Papa… Papa… Don’t leave papa! Well, that brings us to the end of today’s Grammar Gameshow. Let’s count out the points. And the winner is… Mark! With fifty-twelve points. Well done! Here’s what you’ve won!

**Leslie**
It’s an expired lightbulb! Very illuminating!

**Will**
We’ll see you again next week, where you can play for another prize. And Levington. So close, but so far. Even though you didn’t win, did you do well?

**Levington**
Well, I had hoped…

**Will**
Here come the crocodiles. It looks like we’ll need another contestant. Thanks for joining us. Say goodbye Leslie.

**Leslie**
auf Wiedersehen, Leslie.

**Will**
See you next time.