

2. **Scenario 2: An event that has happened *within some timeframe* before time in the past** – In scenario 1 above, we discussed that past perfect depicts an event that happened at *some point* “before” *another event/another time* in the past. It depicts an event that occurred at some *unspecified* time before another event/time in the past; the *time frame of reference* for the event basically starts in the *past*, and continues *infinitely* into the past.

Scenario 2 is a slight variation of scenario 1. Like in scenario 1, the *time frame of reference* for the event in scenario 2 also starts in the *past*; however, rather than continuing *infinitely* into the past, we *restrict* the time frame that we are referring to, in the past. In the illustration below, the *vertical line* restricts the time frame that we are referencing in the past.



For example:

Peter started his business in 2012; by 2014, he had established himself well in the business.

- This sentence is in past perfect (*had established*). If the sentence was *by 2014, Peter had established himself well in the business*, the *time frame of reference* for the event (Peter getting well-established in the business) would basically start in the *past* (in this case, year 2014) and would continue *infinitely* into the past. However, the sentence under consideration also states: *Peter started his business in 2012*. By stating this, the sentence is *restricting* the time frame that it is referring to in the past (in this case, until year 2012, as represented by the *vertical line* in the illustration above).

To summarize, *both* the following sentences *correctly* use Past Perfect, but depict different meaning:

By 2014, Peter had established himself well in the business.

- The time-frame of reference starts in 2014 and continues *infinitely* into the past. At some unspecified time *within* this time-frame of reference (from *infinitely* into the past until 2014), Peter had established himself well in the business.

Peter started his business in 2012; by 2014, he had established himself well in the business.

- The time-frame of reference started in 2014 and continues until 2012. At some unspecified time *within* this time-frame of reference (between 2012 and 2014), Peter had established himself well in the business.

A sentence based on GMATPrep question (*In 1981 children in the United States spent an average...*):

In 2007, a typical web user spent less than 4 hours a month on Facebook; by 2011, that figure went up to 8 hours.

Analysis: The time-frame of reference started in 2011 and continues until 2007. At some unspecified time within this time-frame of reference (between 2007 and 2011), the figure (time per month spent on Facebook) had gone up to 8 hours. So, a *past perfect tense* (*had gone*) would correctly depict this situation, and *not* simple past (*went*). So, the correct sentence is:

In 2007, a typical web user spent less than 4 hours a month on Facebook; by 2011, that figure had gone up to 8 hours.