PAST TENSE

In French you use the perfect tense (le **passé composé**) to say what you have done at a certain time in the past.The **passé composé** is usually formed by using the present tense of AVOIR and the past participle of the verb, just as in English.

J’ai joué = *I have played*

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| Auxiliary verb (AVOIR) past participle | Auxiliary verb (AVOIR) past participle |
| J’ai joué  Tu as joué  Il/elle a joué | Nous avons joué  Vous avez joué  Ils/elles ont joué |

-To form the past participle of regular –er verbs, take the –er off the infinitive and replace it with –é.

Jouer -> joué

-Regular –ir verbs make their past participles by taking off the final –r :

Dormir -> dormi partir -> parti

Finir -> fini sortir -> sorti

-Regular –re verbs take off the –re and replace it with –u :

Répondre -> répondu

Past participle of common verbs :

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| aimer -> aimé  attendre -> attendu  choisir -> choisi  visiter -> visité | écouter -> écouté  finir -> fini  habiter -> habité  inviter -> invité | laver -> lavé  manger -> mangé  parler -> parlé  perdre -> perdu | porter -> porté  ranger -> rangé  regarder -> regardé  rester -> resté | téléphoner -> téléphoné  travailler -> travaillé  vendre -> vendu  demander -> demandé |

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| Past participles of IRREGULAR verbs  avoir -> eu  (to drink) boire -> bu  ( to read) lire -> lu  (to see) voir -> vu  (to come) venir -> venu  (to say) dire -> dit  (to write) écrire -> écrit  (to do) faire-> fait  (to take) prendre -> pris  (to learn) apprendre -> appris  (to understand) comprendre -> compris  (to put) mettre -> mis |

In the perfect tense most verbs take AVOIR but some take ETRE.Je suis allé(e) = *I went / I have been*

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| --- | --- |
| Auxiliary verb (ETRE) Past participle | Auxiliary verb (ETRE) Past participle |
| Je suis allé | Nous sommes allé(es) |
| Tu es allé | Vous êtes allé(es) |
| Il/elle/on est allé(e) | Ils/elles sont allé(es) |

With verbs which use ***être*** *as the auxiliary verb, the past participle agrees with the subject, that means it takes an* ***e*** *if the subject is feminine and* ***s*** *if the subject is plural.*

The following verbs form the passé composé with ETRE. They are sometimes called ‘Mrs Van De Tramp verbs’.

Monter

Rester

Sortir

Venir

Arriver

Naitre

Descendre

Entrer

Tomber

Retourner

Aller

Mourir

Partir

*aller, venir : to go and to come*

*arriver, partir : to arrive and to leave*

*entrer, sortir : to enter and to go out*

*monter, descendre : to go up and to go down*

*naître, mourir : to be born and to die*

*rester : to stay*

*tomber : to fall*

*retourner : to return*

Reflexive verbs in the past tense :

All reflexive verbs take **être** in the perfect tense. The past participle agrees with the subject .

*Se reposer = to relax*

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| --- | --- |
| *Je me suis reposé(e)* | *Nous nous sommes reposé(e)s* |
| *Tu t’es reposé(e)* | *Vous vous êtes reposé(e)s* |
| *Il/elle/on s’est reposé(e)* | *Ils/elles se sont reposé(e)s* |

Summary : step by step

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| **Ex 1 : how to say ‘ she went’**   1. **What verb is it ?** >> *to go* 2. **What is *to go* in French ?** >> *aller* 3. **Is this a ‘MRS VANDETRAMP’ verb** ?>> *yes* 4. **Am I using AVOIR or ETRE** ? >> *ETRE* 5. **What part of ETRE do I need ?** *>> elle est* 6. **What is the past participle of ALLER** ? *>> allé* 7. **Do i need to add anything at the end of the past participle ?** >> *We are using the auxiliary ETRE and It’s a girl, so yes*   She went = elle est allée | **Ex 2 : how to say ‘she ate’**   1. **What verb is it ?** >> *to eat* 2. **What is *to eat* in French ?** >> *manger* 3. **Is this a ‘MRS VANDETRAMP’ verb** ?>> *no* 4. **Am I using AVOIR or ETRE** ? >> *AVOIR* 5. **What part of AVOIR do I need ?** *>> elle a* 6. **What is the past participle of MANGER** ? *>> mangé* 7. **Do i need to add anything at the end of the past participle ?** >> *no, because we are using the auxiliary AVOIR*   She ate = elle a mangé |