



THE PAST TENSE WITH THE AUXILIARY ÊTRE
Thirteenth lesson – Trezième lesson

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INTRODUCTION

- As seen previously, the past tense - **passé composé** – is mostly formed with the auxiliary **avoir**.
- However, **all pronominal verbs** and **common intransitive verbs** - are conjugated with **être** as a helping verb.



INTRODUCTION

○ Remember:

1. The past participles of **-er** verbs end in **-é**
 - Manger (infinitive) → **mangé** (past participle)
2. The past participles of **-ir** verbs end in **-i**
 - Finir (infinitive) → **fini** (past participle)
- 3. The past participles of regular **-re** verbs end in **-u**
 - Perdre (infinitive) → **perdu** (past participle)



1. THE PAST TENSE OF INTRANSITIVE VERBS

- **Intransitive verbs** such as

- *Aller* (to go)
- *Arriver* (to arrive)
- *Entrer* (to enter)
- *Monter* (to climb)
- *Naître* (to be born)
- *Rester* (to stay)
- *Retourner* (to return)
- *Venir* (to come)
- *Partir* (to leave)
- *Sortir* (to go out)
- *Descendre* (to go downstairs)
- *Mourir* (to die)
- *Passer* (to pass, spend time)
- *Tomber* (to fall)

indicate **motion** or **change of place, state or condition**



1.1 VERBS SUCH AS SORTIR (TO GO OUT)

- When talking about the past **intransitive verbs require the auxiliary être.**

Ex.: sortir

*Present tense of être + past participle of the main verb sortir:
sorti*

- *Samedi soir, **nous sommes sortis** avec des amis!*

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- *Saturday night, we went out with friends*



1.1 VERBS SUCH AS SORTIR (TO GO OUT)

Note :

- Verbs are conjugated with **être** only when they are **intransitive** (i.e. verbs that do not take a complement).
- However, when these verbs are used **transitively** (they need a complement), the auxiliary **avoir** is used



1.1 VERBS SUCH AS SORTIR (TO GO OUT)

Observe:

- a) ***Elle** est **sortie**.* (intrans.) *He went out*
- *Elle a sorti la voiture.* (trans.) *I took the car out*

- b) ***Ils** sont **descendus**.* (intrans.) *They went downstairs*
- *Ils ont descendu la valise.* (trans.) *They took the suitcase
downstairs*



1.2. AGREEMENT OF THE PAST PARTICIPLE

- For all **verbs** conjugated with the auxiliary **être**, in any compound tense, the **past participle** must agree in **gender and number** with the subject.

Ex. : intransitive verb **sortir** (*to go out*)

- *Il est sorti* (*m. sg*)
- *Elle est sortie* (*f. sg*)
- *Nous sommes sortis* (*plural*)



1.3 CONJUGATING SORTIR (TO GO OUT)

Singular	Plural
Je suis sorti(e)	Nous sommes sorti(e)s
Tu es sorti(e)	Vous êtes sorti(e)(s)
Il/on est sorti Elle est sortie	Ils sont sortis Elles sont sorties



1.4 PAST TENSE OF INTRANSITIVE VERBS & NEGATIVE SENTENCES

- To form **negative sentences** with **intransitive verbs** in the past tense, use **ne...pas** (or another negative adverb) with the conjugated verb: in this case the auxiliary **être**.
 - ***Je ne suis pas allé(e) en Afrique mais en Asie.***
 - *I didn't go to Africa, but I've been to Asia.*



1.5 PAST TENSE OF INTRANSITIVE VERBS & YES/NO QUESTIONS

- To ask **yes/no questions** with **intransitive verbs**, use the **declarative word order**, the construction **est-ce que** or **inversion**.

- *Tu es déjà allé(e) en Afrique?*
- *Est-ce que tu es déjà allé(e) en Afrique?*
- *Es-tu déjà allé(e) en Afrique?*

→Have you been in Africa?



2. THE PAST TENSE OF PRONOMINAL VERBS

All **pronominal verbs** such as

- *Se baigner* (to bathe)
- *S'habiller*(to get dressed)
- *Se laver* (to wash oneself)
- *Se lever* (to get / wake up)
- *Se moquer* (to make fun of)
- *Se préparer* (to get ready / prepare oneself)
- *Se promener* (to walk)
- *Se raser* (to shave)
- *Se reposer* (to rest)

...

require the auxiliary être when conjugated in the past tense.



2.1 VERBS SUCH AS S'AMUSER (TO HAVE FUN)

Ex.: s'amuser

Present tense of être + past participle of the main verb
s'amuser: s'amusé

- *Samedi soir, nous nous sommes amusés!*

-

- *Saturday night, we had fun!*



2.2 AGREEMENT OF THE PAST PARTICIPLE

- For all **verbs** conjugated with the auxiliary **être**, in any compound tense, the **past participle** must agree in **gender and number** with the subject.
- Ex. : Pronominal verb **s'amuser** (*to have fun*)
 - ***Ils se sont amusés*** (*m. pl.*)
 - ***Elles se sont amusées*** (*f. pl.*)
 - ***Nous nous sommes amusés*** (*plural*)



2.3 CONJUGATING S'AMUSER (TO HAVE FUN/ENJOY ONESELF)

Singular	plural
Je me suis amusé(e)	Nous nous sommes amusé(e)s
Tu t'es amusé(e)	Vous vous êtes amusé(e)(s)
Il/on s'est amusé Elle s'est amusée	Ils se sont amusés Elles se sont amusées



2.4 PAST TENSE OF PRONOMINAL VERBS & NEGATIVE SENTENCES

- In **negative sentences** using **pronominal verbs**, **ne** precedes the reflexive pronoun and **pas** follows the auxiliary verb:
 - *Je ne me suis pas amusé(e) à la soirée d'hier.*
 - *I didn't have fun at the party yesterday*



2.5 PAST TENSE OF PRONOMINAL VERBS & YES/NO QUESTIONS

- To ask **yes/no questions** with **pronominal verbs**, use the **usual word order**, the construction **est-ce que** or **inversion**.

- *Elles se sont amusées en Afrique?*
- *Est-ce qu'elles se sont amusées en Afrique?*
- *Se sont-elles amusées en Afrique?*

→ Did they have fun in Africa?



C'est tout pour aujourd'hui!

Au revoir!

Merci!

