



L'Imparfait

French 5/6



Expressing the past in French

Le passé composé- The present perfect

- Formed using avoir+verb or être+verb
- Completed actions in the past
- More specific: you can usually count how many times the event happened and you often know when the event began and ended
- Ex. Hier soir, **j'ai mangé** un hamburger. Last night I ate a hamburger.


L'imparfait- The imperfect

- Formed by adding imperfect endings to the verb
- Incomplete actions in the past
- Ongoing actions in the past
- Emotions, weather, descriptions of people or things
- Ex. Quand **j'étais** jeune, je **prenais** le bus. When I was young, I used to take the bus.



When to use the imperfect in depth

- Incomplete actions in the past: Actions that do not have a clear ending point. Often these are actions that are interrupted. Ex. Last night I was watching TV when my sister came home. The action of watching TV does not have a clear end, therefore it is an incomplete action.
- Ongoing actions in the past: When reflecting on the past, the imperfect is often used to describe actions that occurred too many times to count. Ex. When I was younger, I used to eat cinnamon toast for breakfast. This action does not have a clear end or a specific number of occurrences.
- Emotions in the past: Emotions in the past are usually expressed with the imperfect because they do not have a clear beginning and end. Ex. Yesterday I felt happy.
- Weather in the past: Weather in the past is also usually expressed with the imperfect because it does not have a specific time frame. Ex. Last week it was cold.
- Description of people or things in the past: Most often descriptions of what someone looks like, what they are wearing, or their personality do not have a clear ending because people do not change that quickly so descriptions are also in the imperfect. Ex. She was blonde.



Differentiating between the imperfect and perfect tense can be difficult.

It takes practice.

There is not always one correct tense to use and in some cases they can be switched.



How to form the imperfect

1. Take the nous form of the verb in the present indicative
2. Remove the -ons from the end of the verb
3. Add the Imperfect ending



Imperfect endings

Je...ais	Nous...ions
Tu...ais	Vous...iez
Il/elle/on...ait	Ils/elles...aient



Ex 1. Chanter (Er verb)

1. Take the nous form of the verb in the present indicative: chantons
2. Remove the -ons: chant
3. Add imperfect endings

Je chantais

Nous chantions

Tu chantais

Vous chantiez

Il/elle/on chantait

Ils/elles chantaient



Ex 2. Finir (Ir verb)

1. Take the nous form of the verb: Finissons
2. Remove the-ons: Finiss
3. Attach imperfect endings

Je finissais

Nous finissions

Tu finissais

Vous finissiez

Il/elle/on finissait

Ils/elles finissaient



Ex. 3 Descendre (Re verb)

1. Take the nous form of the verb: Descendons
2. Remove the -ons: Descend
3. Attach imperfect endings

Je descendais

Nous descendions

Tu descendais

Vous descendiez

Il/elle/on descendait

Ils/elles descendaient



Être in the imperfect

Être is the only verb that does not follow the normal rules for forming the imperfect. Être's root in the imperfect is ét.

Être in the imperfect:

J'étais


Nous étions

Tu étais

Vous étiez

Il/elle/on était

Ils/elles étaient



Quiz Your Knowledge

Put the bolded verbs into the past tense, choose carefully between past perfect and imperfect.
Answers on next slide.

Quand j(e) **être** plus jeune, je **vivre** dans un appartement à Brooklyn. Je me **réveiller** à 8 heures tous les jours pour l'école. Je me **marcher** vers le bus avec ma sœur. Nous **monter** dans le bus et **aller** à l'école. Un jour, je me **réveiller** tard. Ma sœur et moi, nous **dépêcher** mais nous **rater** le bus. Nous **rentrer** chez nous. Nous **demander** à notre mère de nous conduire à l'école. Elle **être** très folle mais elle **accepter**. Elle nous **conduire** à l'école et nous **être** à l'heure!



Answers

1. étais
2. vivais
3. réveillais
4. marcherais
5. montions
6. allions
7. suis réveillé
8. sommes dépêchés
9. avons raté
10. sommes rentrés
11. avons demandé
12. était
13. a accepté.
14. a conduits
15. étions à l'heure