

G You use the perfect tense to talk about the past (in French it is called the *passé composé*). It is the most commonly used past tense, so it is very important.

It is used when you are talking about single events that happened in the past: for example, 'I went', 'he ran', 'they bought'. However, it can also mean 'I have gone / I did go', 'he has run / he did run' or 'they have bought / they did buy'.

Forming the perfect tense

The perfect tense of French verbs is made up of two parts: the **auxiliary verb** + the **past participle**. The auxiliary verb must be in the present tense. Most verbs use **avoir** as the auxiliary:

j'ai	nous avons
tu as	vous avez
il/elle/on a	ils/elles ont

Then add a **past participle**: *J'ai joué au tennis.* I played tennis.

Forming the past participle

To form the past participle of a regular verb:

-er verbs e.g. <i>manger</i>	remove -er and add é	mangé	<i>il a mangé</i> he ate
-ir verbs e.g. <i>finir</i>	remove -r and add i	fini	<i>on a fini</i> we have finished
-re verbs e.g. <i>répondre</i>	remove -re and add u	répondu	<i>j'ai répondu</i> I answered

There are quite a lot of irregular past participles and sadly, these are the most common verbs. You will just have to learn them!

In the negative, you put **ne... pas** around the part of *avoir*:

Je n'ai pas regardé le film. I haven't watched the film.
Elle n'a pas joué au volley. She didn't play volleyball.

Irregular past participles

avoir → eu	boire → bu
être → été	voir → vu
dire → dit	lire → lu
écrire → écrit	pouvoir → pu
mettre → mis	devoir → dû
prendre → pris	vouloir → voulu
comprendre → compris	savoir → su
faire → fait	

1 Add the correct part of *avoir* to complete these sentences.

Example: J'ai _____ regardé la télé.

- Ils _____ téléchargé de la musique.
- Tu _____ préparé les légumes?
- Elle n' _____ pas fini ses devoirs.
- Nous _____ fait du ski.
- Vous _____ visité la France?
- Monsieur Richard _____ perdu son passeport.

2 Replace the infinitive in brackets with the correct past participle.

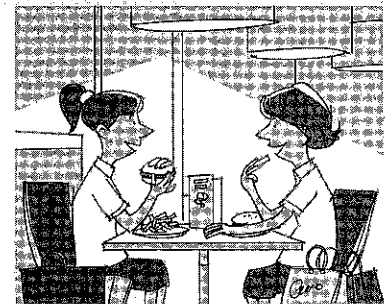
Example: Nous avons (*acheter*) des billets. Nous avons acheté des billets.

- J'ai (*faire*) du vélo. _____
- Nous avons (*manger*) un repas délicieux. _____
- Elle a (*attendre*) le bus. _____
- Vous avez (*voir*) le bateau. _____
- Elles ont (*pouvoir*) acheter une voiture. _____
- Ils ont (*écrire*) un article. _____
- Tu as (*boire*) du café. _____
- Les hommes ont (*finir*) leur travail. _____

3 Put the infinitive into the correct form of the perfect tense.

- Samedi dernier **1** (je - prendre) le car en ville où **2** (je - retrouver) ma meilleure amie. **3** (Nous - faire) les magasins et **4** (elle - acheter) des baskets. **5** (Nous - prendre) un burger dans un restaurant et moi, **6** (je - choisir) un milkshake. **7** (Elle - boire) un café. **8** (Nous - décider) de rentrer chez moi à pied. **9** (Nous - écouter) de la musique et **10** (mes parents - préparer) le dîner.

★ You will need two words to form the present tense each time: a part of *avoir* and the past participle of the verb. There are some irregular past participles here!



4 Translate the sentences into English.

- 1 Elle a envoyé un e-mail.
- 2 Nous avons compris les questions.
- 3 Je n'ai pas vu le bus.
- 4 Tu as fait de la natation hier?
.....
- 5 La semaine dernière, ils ont voulu aller au cinéma.
.....
- 6 Vous avez joué au golf samedi dernier?
.....

★ It's good practice to translate from French into English before you start to translate into French in the perfect tense. Remember that in the perfect tense there will always be a part of *avoir* and a past participle.

5 Translate these sentences into French.

- 1 She finished her homework.
- 2 We played football.
- 3 I saw the film at the cinema.

Homework is plural in French.

You could use *on* or *nous*, but remember that they use different persons of the verb.

Use *en* with this form of transport.

6 Now translate this passage into French.

Last year I spent my holidays at the seaside with my friends. We travelled by bus. Lionel and Joachim played tennis on the beach but Angèle read a magazine and I ate two ice creams. Later we bought some bread and some cheese and we had a picnic.

Masculine words use *du* for 'some'.

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