

LE PASSÉ COMPOSÉ : THE PERFECT TENSE

3 TYPES OF VERB

THE **PERFECT** is the most commonly used past tense in French and is used

- to express a **single, one-off action**
J'ai joué au foot hier.
- a **repeated action** in the past
J'ai joué 5 fois au foot la semaine dernière.
- a **series of past actions**
J'ai joué au foot, au basket et aux échecs.
- It is the equivalent of 3 English past tenses:
I played **I have played** I did play

FORMING THE PASSÉ COMPOSÉ

The perfect tense is formed in a very similar way as the English:
I have played as it is made up of 3 elements:

I	HAVE	PLAYED
a subject	an auxiliary	a past participle
J'	AI	JOUÉ

Unlike English, French has a choice of 2 possible auxiliary verbs: **AVOIR** & **ÊTRE**. **Most** verbs **take AVOIR** (to have) as in English but there is a small group of verbs that take **ÊTRE** instead of AVOIR. **Reflexive verbs** also take **ÊTRE** + a reflexive pronoun.

PAST PARTICIPLES

Regular past participles in English add **ED** to the stem of the verb:

I've play**ED** I've want**ED**

There are also many examples in English of irregular endings:

I've **GONE** I've **BOUGHT**

...and the same is true for French.

AVOIR Verbs

These form the majority of verbs and they fall in to 2 categories:

IRREGULAR - PAST PARTICIPLES

(see above)

...and **REGULAR**

ER ► É	jouer ► joué
IR ► I	finir ► fini
RE ► U	vendre ► vendu

ÊTRE Verbs

I	HAVE	GONE
a subject	an auxiliary	a past participle
JE	SUIS	ALLÉ/E*

***ÊTRE** verbs have the added element of a possible agreement:

Il est allé_	MASCULINE	NO ending
elle est allée	FEMININE	+E
nous sommes allés	PLURAL	+S
elles sont allées	FEM PL	+ES

REFLEXIVE Verbs

These are also **ÊTRE** verbs + **reflexive pronouns** + ***possible agreement**

I	HAVE	WASHED	MYSELF
a subject	an auxiliary	a past participle	a reflexive pronoun
a subject	a reflexive	an auxiliary pronoun	a past participle
BOY JE	ME	SUIS	LAVÉ
GIRL JE	ME	SUIS	LAVÉE(*)

In French, the reflexive pronoun comes directly in front of the auxiliary ÊTRE.

