

# The passé composé and the imparfait CHAPITRE 6

**In English** There are several ways to talk about the past in English. The following verb forms are usually used to describe completed events that occurred in the past.

We **played** tennis. We **did play** tennis. We **have played** tennis.

To describe actions that were ongoing in the past or to tell what used to happen, you can use **was** or **were** along with the **-ing** form of a verb, or you can use the helping verb **used to**.

We **were playing** tennis. We **used to play** tennis.

**A** Check the appropriate column to indicate whether the sentence describes a completed event in the past or something that was an ongoing activity or condition in the past.

1. Brian went to the store, didn't he?
2. We used to have so much fun!
3. Did you hear the phone ring?
4. Joanie was watching TV last night.
5. It was cold and rainy.
6. I finally made my decision.
7. It used to rain every afternoon.

Completed event	Ongoing event or condition
✓	

**In French** To talk about the past, you can use the **passé composé** and the **imparfait**. Use the **passé composé** to describe completed events in the past or tell what someone did in a set period of time.

Une fois, j'**ai fait** un château de sable incroyable!

Nous **avons pris** le petit-déjeuner à 7h.

Use the **imparfait** to tell how things were or what used to happen repeatedly.

Quand j'**étais** jeune, nous **allions** à la plage chaque été.

Ils **jouaient** aux billes tous les jours.

You can also use the **imparfait** to describe people and things in the past.

Il **faisait** très beau. Il y **avait** beaucoup de fleurs.

Anaïs **était** toujours heureuse.

**THE PASSÉ COMPOSÉ AND THE IMPARFAIT**

**CHAPITRE 6**

**B** Check the appropriate column to indicate whether the sentence describes a completed event in the past or something that was an ongoing activity or condition in the past.

1. Il faisait toujours beau le matin.
2. Jean était jeune et sportif.
3. J’allais au café avec mes copains
4. Je n’ai pas fait la vaisselle hier soir.
5. David a pris le bus.
6. Odile a eu une bonne note en maths.
7. Elles étaient occupées cette semaine.

Completed event	Ongoing event or condition
	✓

**C** Complete the following sentences with the **imparfait** or the **passé composé** of the verbs in parentheses.

1. Ce matin, il **est allé** \_\_\_\_\_ chez ses grands-parents. (aller)
2. Normalement, elle \_\_\_\_\_ de bonnes idées. (avoir)
3. Il \_\_\_\_\_ toujours chaud en été. (faire)
4. D’abord, nous \_\_\_\_\_ le train. (prendre)
5. De temps en temps, Patricia \_\_\_\_\_ en retard. (arriver)
6. Vous \_\_\_\_\_ souvent au cirque? (aller)
7. Nous jouions aux dames quand tu \_\_\_\_\_. (téléphoner)
8. Quand Henri \_\_\_\_\_ jeune, il \_\_\_\_\_ jouer au train électrique. (être, aimer)

**D** Depending on the context, the English past tense can be equivalent to the French **imparfait** or **passé composé**. Tell which tense you would use to translate these sentences. Explain your choice.

1. I wrote letters to my cousins yesterday.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. When I was young, I wrote letters to my cousins every month.

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