



L'IMPARFAIT

THE IMPERFECT TENSE

INTRODUCTION

Previously, we learned the « **PASSÉ COMPOSÉ** » tense
in order to express ourselves in **the PAST**.

Today we are going to learn the second most used past tense,
which is called the « **IMPARFAIT** » tense.

The « **IMPARFAIT** » could be translated into English using :
the **Past Continuous**, the **Past Simple**, or even the « **Used To** » structure.

Don't worry,
in this lesson we are going to focus more specifically on the **conjugation**,
and in the **next lesson**, we are going to learn a very simple way to choose
between the « **PASSÉ COMPOSÉ** » and the « **IMPARFAIT** » tenses.

Let's start!

CONJUGATION

To conjugate a VERB in the « IMPARFAIT » tense:

1. First conjugate the verb in the PRESENT TENSE using the SUBJECT « nous » (we)

Nous **donnons** (we give)

2. Then remove the **"ONS"** at the END and **keep the ROOT of the VERB**:

Nous **donn _** (we give)

3. Now add : **"ais" / "ais" / "ait" / "ions" / "iez" / "aient"** : at the end :

Je **donnais** (I was giving / I used to give / I gave)

EXAMPLE

DONNER (to give)



Nous **donnons**.

(We give)

SUBJECT	ROOT	ENDING	PRONUNCIATION	MEANING
Je	donn	ais	[je do nè]	I was giving
Tu	donn	ais	[tu do nè]	You were giving
Il / Elle	donn	ait	[i l / è l do nè]	He / She was giving
Nous	donn	ions	[nou do ni on]	We were giving
Vous	donn	iez	[vou do ni é]	You were giving
Ils / Elles	donn	aient	[i l / è l do nè]	They were giving

MORE EXAMPLES OF VERBS ENDING WITH « ER »

PARLER (to talk / speak)



Nous **parlons**.

(We talk / speak)

SUBJECT	ROOT	ENDING	PRONUNCIATION	MEANING
Je	parl	ais	[je pa r lè]	I was talking
Tu	parl	ais	[tu pa r lè]	You were talking
Il / Elle	parl	ait	[i l / è l pa r lè]	He / She was talking
Nous	parl	ions	[nou pa r li on]	We were talking
Vous	parl	iez	[vou pa r li é]	You were talking
Ils / Elles	parl	aient	[i l / è l pa r lè]	They were talking

ALLER (to go)



Nous **allons**.

(We go)

SUBJECT	ROOT	ENDING	PRONUNCIATION	MEANING
J'	all	ais	[ja lè]	I was going
Tu	all	ais	[tu a lè]	You were going
Il / Elle	all	ait	[i l / è l a lè]	He / She was going
Nous	all	ions	[nou za li on]	We were going
Vous	all	iez	[vou za li é]	You were going
Ils / Elles	all	aient	[i l / è l a lè]	They were going

JOUER (to play)



Nous **jouons**.

(We play)

SUBJECT	ROOT	ENDING	PRONUNCIATION	MEANING
	JOU	ER	[jou é]	TO PLAY
Je	jou	ais	[je jou è]	I was playing
Tu	jou	ais	[tu jou è]	You were playing
Il / Elle	jou	ait	[i l / è l jou è]	He / She was playing
Nous	jou	ions	[nou jou i on]	We were playing
Vous	jou	iez	[vou jou i é]	You were playing
Ils / Elles	jou	aient	[i l / è l jou è]	They were playing

MORE EXAMPLES OF VERBS ENDING WITH « IR »

DORMIR (to sleep)



Nous **dormons**.

(We sleep)

SUBJECT	ROOT	ENDING	PRONUNCIATION	MEANING
Je	dorm	ais	[je dôr mè]	I was sleeping
Tu	dorm	ais	[tu dôr mè]	You were sleeping
Il / Elle	dorm	ait	[i l / è l dôr mè]	He / She was sleeping
Nous	dorm	ions	[nou dôr mi on]	We were sleeping
Vous	dorm	iez	[vou dôr mi é]	You were sleeping
Ils / Elles	dorm	aient	[i l / è l dôr mè]	They were sleeping

VENIR (to come)



Nous **venons**.

(We come)

SUBJECT	ROOT	ENDING	PRONUNCIATION	MEANING
Je	ven	ais	[ve nè]	I was coming
Tu	ven	ais	[tu ve nè]	You were coming
Il / Elle	ven	ait	[i l / è l ve nè]	He / She was coming
Nous	ven	ions	[nou ve ni on]	We were coming
Vous	ven	iez	[vou ve ni é]	You were coming
Ils / Elles	ven	aient	[i l / è l ve nè]	They were coming

FINIR (to finish)



Nous **finissons**.

(We finish)

SUBJECT	ROOT	ENDING	PRONUNCIATION	MEANING
J'	finiss	ais	[je fi ni sè]	I was finishing
Tu	finiss	ais	[tu fi ni sè]	You were finishing
Il / Elle	finiss	ait	[i l / è l fi ni sè]	He / She was finishing
Nous	finiss	ions	[nou fi ni si on]	We were finishing
Vous	finiss	iez	[vou fi ni si é]	You were finishing
Ils / Elles	finiss	aient	[i l / è l fi ni sè]	They were finishing

EXAMPLES OF VERBS WITH VARIOUS ENDING

LIRE (to read)



Nous **lis**ons.

(We read)

SUBJECT	ROOT	ENDING	PRONUNCIATION	MEANING
Je	lis	ais	[je li zè]	I was reading
Tu	lis	ais	[tu li zè]	You were reading
Il / Elle	lis	ait	[i l / è l li zè]	He / She was reading
Nous	lis	ions	[nou li zi on]	We were reading
Vous	lis	iez	[vou li zi é]	You were reading
Ils / Elles	lis	aient	[i l / è l li zè]	They were reading

VOULOIR (to want)



Nous **voul**ons.

(We want)

SUBJECT	ROOT	ENDING	PRONUNCIATION	MEANING
Je	voul	ais	[je vou lè]	I use to want
Tu	voul	ais	[tu vou lè]	You use to want
Il / Elle	voul	ait	[i l / è l vou lè]	He / She use to want
Nous	voul	ions	[nou vou li on]	We use to want
Vous	voul	iez	[vou vou li é]	You use to want
Ils / Elles	voul	aient	[i l / è l vou lè]	They use to want

FAIRE (to do / make)



Nous **fais**ons.

(We do / make)

SUBJECT	ROOT	ENDING	PRONUNCIATION	MEANING
Je	fais	ais	[je fe zè]	I was doing
Tu	fais	ais	[tu fe zè]	You were doing
Il / Elle	fais	ait	[i l / è l fe zè]	He / She was doing
Nous	fais	ions	[nou fe zi on]	We were doing
Vous	fais	iez	[vou fe zi é]	You were doing
Ils / Elles	fais	aient	[i l / è l fe zè]	They were doing

PARTICULAR CASE

The « IMPARFAIT » tense is a very regular tense.

In fact, there is **ONLY one exception** :

the verb “ÊTRE” (to be).

The **root of the verb “ÊTRE” is unique**

when conjugated in the « IMPARFAIT » tense.

Let's have a look at its conjugation :

ÊTRE (to be)		 Nous sommes (We are)		
SUBJECT	ROOT	ENDING	PRONUNCIATION	MEANING
J'	ét	ais	[j é tè]	I was
Tu	ét	ais	[tu é tè]	You were
Il / Elle	ét	ait	[i l / è lé tè]	He / She was
Nous	ét	ions	[nou zé ti on]	We were
Vous	ét	iez	[vou zé ti é]	You were
Ils / Elles	ét	aient	[i l / è l zé tè]	They were