

1. formation
2. uses

Like the 'passé simple', the **passé antérieur** is a literary tense. They are often found together in the same text. The passé antérieur is used in literature, in formal writing, and in very formal speeches, when speaking of past events which are prior to other past actions; it is the literary equivalent of the **plus-que-parfait**. In other words, it is used for a past action that was completed before another action in the past (usually expressed in the passé simple).

### formation

The passé antérieur is formed with the **passé simple** of the appropriate auxiliary (**avoir** or **être**) plus the past participle of the main verb.

*Passé antérieur = auxiliary in the literary past + past participle of main verb*

<b>parler 'to speak'</b>	
j' <b>eus parlé</b> , I had spoken	nous <b>eûmes parlé</b> , we had spoken
tu <b>eus parlé</b> , you had spoken	vous <b>eûtes parlé</b> , you had spoken
il / elle / on <b>eut parlé</b> , he / she / it had spoken	ils / elles <b>eurent parlé</b> , they had spoken

<b>aller 'to go'</b>	
je <b>fus allé(e)</b> , I had gone	nous <b>fûmes allé(e)s</b> , we had gone
tu <b>fus allé(e)</b> , you had gone	vous <b>fûtes allé(e)s</b> , you had gone
il / elle / on <b>fut allé(e)</b> , he / she / it had gone	ils / elles <b>furent allé(e)s</b> , they had gone

For a list of verbs that use **être** as an auxiliary, like **aller**, see the [Alamo of être](#). Remember that all pronominal verbs require **être** as the auxiliary verb.

<b>se coucher 'to go to bed'</b>	
je me <b>fus couché(e)</b> , I had gone to bed	nous nous <b>fûmes couché(e)s</b> , we had gone to bed
tu te <b>fus couché(e)</b> , you had gone to bed	vous vous <b>fûtes couché(e)s</b> , you had gone to bed
il / elle / on se <b>fut couché(e)</b> , he / she / it had gone to bed	ils / elles se <b>furent couché(e)s</b> , they had gone to bed

### uses

The passé antérieur occurs most often in subordinate clauses; it is introduced by conjunctions such as **après** (after), **aussitôt que** or **dèsque** (as soon as). Note that, in this case, the main clause is always in the passé simple. The English equivalent is usually (but not always) **had + past participle**.

<b>prior action in the past (passé antérieur)</b>	<b>action in the past (passé simple)</b>
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Aussitôt qu'il <b>fut né</b> ,	Tex <b>commença</b> à parler.
As soon as he was born,	Tex began to speak.
Après qu'il <b>eut vécu</b> quelques années à Paris,	Tex <b>retourna</b> dans son pays d'origine
After he had lived several years in Paris,	Tex returned to his native land.
Quand il <b>eut publié</b> son premier recueil de poèmes érotiques,	il y <b>eut</b> un grand scandale.
When he had published his first collection of erotic poems,	there was a big scandal.

With **quand** and **lorsque** (when), the choice of tense depends on the meaning of each clause, as to which action occurs first. In the last example, Tex published his poems first (**passé antérieur** in the dependent clause) and then there was a scandal. However, the **passé antérieur** may also occur in the main clause, and the **passé simple** in the dependent clause: Quand il **arriva** au Texas, Tex **eut** déjà **fait** la connaissance de Tammy.



Les enfants: Maman, maman, raconte-nous la suite de l'histoire de Cendrillon!

Rita: Bon, d'accord. "On défendit à Cendrillon d'aller au bal du roi et on lui ordonna de faire le ménage dans toute la maison. Une fois seule, Cendrillon se mit au travail ... Quand elle **eut fini** de nettoyer les fenêtres, elle fit les lits. Lorsque les chambres furent propres, elle fit la vaisselle. Enfin, après qu'elle **eut rangé** toute la maison, elle éclata en sanglots ... . Alors sa marraine la Fée apparut ..."

On entend les enfants ronfler.

Children: Mommy, mommy, tell us the rest of the story of Cinderella!

Rita: Oh, OK. "Cinderella was forbidden to go to the king's ball and was ordered to clean the house from top to bottom. Once alone, Cinderella started to work ... When she had finished cleaning the windows, she made the beds. When the bedrooms were clean, she did the dishes. Finally, after she had tidied up the whole house, she broke into sobs ... . Then her fairy godmother appeared ..."

Sound of the children snoring.



exercices

### fill in the blanks

Give the **passé antérieur** of the verb indicated in parentheses.

1. Les nonnes françaises \_\_\_\_\_ au Texas. (voyager)
2. Tex \_\_\_\_\_ les oeuvres de Sartre. (étudier)
3. Rita: Tu \_\_\_\_\_ tout seul. (partir)

4. Tex: J' \_\_\_\_\_ ma profession à l'âge de 6 ans. (choisir)
5. Rita: Nous \_\_\_\_\_ sans Tex. (ne pas s'amuser)
6. Tex: Rita et Trey, vous \_\_\_\_\_ votre frère! (oublier)
7. Les parents de Tex \_\_\_\_\_ amoureux à Houston. (tomber)
8. La mère supérieure \_\_\_\_\_ à Lyon pendant la guerre. (venir)
9. La mère supérieure \_\_\_\_\_ plusieurs orphelins. (élever)
10. Paw-Paw \_\_\_\_\_ la femme de sa vie à Paris. (connaître)
11. Paw-Paw \_\_\_\_\_ héros de la guerre. (devenir)
12. Les parents de Tex \_\_\_\_\_ sur l'autoroute. (mourir)