tex's french grammar
passé composé with etre

uses

There are several past tenses in French, and each is used in very specific situations. The **passé composé** is the most common past tense; it is used to relate actions or events completed in the past. The passé composé may be translated into English in three different ways depending on the context.

🔊 Tex **est allé** à l'Alamo.

Tex went to the Alamo.
Tex has gone to the Alamo.
Tex did go to the Alamo.

formation

The passé composé consists of two parts, the present tense of an auxiliary, or helping verb (either **avoir** or **être**), and a past participle. In most instances the auxiliary verb used is avoir.

passé composé = present tense of auxiliary + past participle

However, several intransitive verbs, like **aller** (to go), require the auxiliary **être** instead. Note that the past participle agrees with the subject in number and in gender.
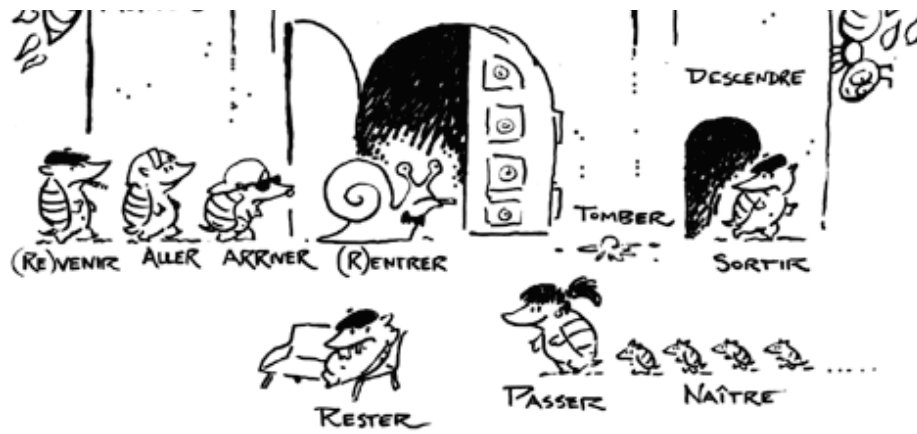
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aller 'to go'	
je **suis allé(e)**, I went (have gone)	nous **sommes allé(e)s**, we went (have gone)
tu **es allé(e)**, you went (have gone)	vous **êtes allé(e)(s)**, you went (have gone)
il / on **est allé**, he / one went (has gone)	ils **sont allés**, they went, (have gone)
elle **est allée**, she went (has gone)	elles **sont allées**, they went, (have gone)

The negation is formed by placing **ne ... pas** around the conjugated verb, which in this case, is the auxiliary **être**: Je **ne** suis **pas** allé(e), Tu **n'**es **pas** allé(e), etc.

the Alamo of être

Many intransitive verbs, that is, verbs not followed by a direct object, take **être** in the passé composé. Many of these verbs also indicate motion. They are verbs of coming and going. Even **naître** (to be born) and **mourir** (to die) can be thought of as coming and going in metaphorical terms. The **Alamo d'Être** illustrates this group of verbs.

A few of these verbs of movement (**monter**, **descendre**, **sortir**, **passer**, **retourner**) may sometimes take a direct object, thus becoming transitive. When they do, the auxiliary used is **avoir**, instead of **être**. Example:

🔊 Tex **est** sorti.   Tex went out.

Tex n'**a** pas sorti la poubelle.   Tex did not take out the garbage.

It is important to note that many intransitive verbs of movement, like **courir** and **marcher**, do not use **être** but **avoir**. The pronominal verbs form another important group of verbs which use **être** as the auxiliary in the passé composé.

irregular past participles
The past participles of the verbs that use **être** as an auxiliary are regular except for the following:

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infinitive	translation	past participle
venir	to come	**venu**
devenir	to become	**devenu**
revenir	to come back	**revenu**
naître	to be born	**né**
mourir	to die	**mort**

agreement of the past participle
The past participle of a verb which takes **être** agrees in gender and number with the subject; that means an **-e** is added to the past participle to agree with a feminine subject and an **-s** is added for a plural subject. If the subject is feminine plural, **-es** is added.

🔊 Joe-Bob: Tex, Corey et toi, vous **êtes rentrés** de l'Alamo?

Joe-Bob: Tex, did you and Corey come back from the Alamo?

Tex: Oui. Mais Tammy et Bette **sont restées** à San Antonio pour faire des achats.

Tex: Yes. But Tammy and Bette stayed in San Antonio to go shopping.

Corey: Tu n'as pas entendu? Tout d'un coup Tammy **est devenue** toute pâle et elle **est tombée** dans la rivière!

Corey: Didn't you hear? All of a sudden Tammy turned very pale and she fell in the river!

Joe-Bob: Mais, qu'est-ce qui s'est passé?

Joe-Bob: But, what happened?

Corey: Calme-toi. Elle n'**est** pas **morte**! Tex et moi **sommes arrivés** pour la sauver!

Corey: Calm down. She didn't die! Tex and I arrived to save her!

fill in the blanks

Give the passé composé of the verb indicated in parentheses.

1. Tammy _____ en France il y a un an. (aller)

2. Edouard _____ en retard, comme toujours. (arriver)

3. Hier Tammy _____ dans le cours d'aérobique 'step'. (tomber)

4. Fiona: Moi, je _____ à la maison hier soir. (rester)

5. Fiona: Corey et Joe-Bob, vous _____ très tard après la fête. (rentrer)

6. Tammy et Bette _____ ensemble. (venir)

7. Les enfants de Rita _____ en mai. (naître)

8. Tammy: Tex, pourquoi est-ce que tu _____ avec Bette? (partir)

9. Tex: Mes parents _____ sur l'autoroute. (mourir)

10. Tex: Je _____ une fois avec une fille qui s'appelle Marianne. (sortir)

11. Après la guerre, Paw-Paw _____ héros. (devenir)

12. Tex et Tammy _____ au rez-de-chaussée. (descendre)

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