


1. formation
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formation

The pluperfect (**le plus-que-parfait**) is formed with the auxiliary in the **imparfait** followed by the **past participle** of the verb. The choice of auxiliary, **être** or **avoir**, is the same as for the **passé composé** (the **Alamo** of **être** applies).

Plus-que-parfait = auxiliary in the imparfait + past participle of verb

 **manger** 'to eat'

j' avais mangé , I had eaten	nous avions mangé , we had eaten
tu avais mangé , you had eaten	vous aviez mangé , you had eaten
il, elle / on avait mangé , he, she (it) / one had eaten	ils / elles avaient mangé , they had eaten


 **aller** 'to go'

j' étais allé(e) , I had gone	nous étions allé(e)s , we had gone
tu étais allé(e) , you had gone	vous étiez allé(e)s , you had gone
il, elle / on était allé(e) , he, she (it) / one had gone	ils / elles étaient allé(e)s , they had gone

The negation is formed in the usual manner by placing **ne ... pas** around the conjugated verb, which in this case is the auxiliary: Je **n'**avais **pas** mangé (I had not eaten), Je **n'**étais **pas** allé (I had not gone), etc.

uses

In past narration, the plus-que-parfait is used to express an **action which precedes another past action** or moment. In other words, the action in the plus-que-parfait is prior to another past action or moment. In English the plus-que-parfait is indicated by **had + past participle**. In affirmative sentences in French, it is often, but not always, accompanied by the adverb **déjà** (already).

 A l'âge de sept ans, Tex avait déjà rédigé dix poèmes.	At the age of seven, Tex had already composed ten poems.
Quelques années plus tard, il avait abandonné tout espoir de gloire littéraire. Mais il a changé d'avis quand il a lu les poèmes à Tammy.	A few years later, he had abandoned all hope of literary fame. But he changed his mind when he read the poems to Tammy.
Elle a adoré les poèmes innocents que Tex avait écrits pendant sa jeunesse.	She adored the innocent poems that Tex had written during his youth.

Not all instances of **had + past participle** in English are translated into plus-que-parfait in French. For example, in French **depuis** is usually used with the imperfect (**not** the pluperfect) and 'had **just** done something' is generally translated by **venir de** in the imparfait.

 Le public littéraire attendait depuis des années la nouvelle poésie de Tex quand il a enfin retrouvé son inspiration.	The literary public had been waiting for years for new poetry from Tex when at last he found his inspiration again.
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En fait, Tex **venait de** commencer un nouveau poème quand son éditeur a téléphoné.

In fact, Tex **had just** started a new poem when his editor called.

Contrast the plus-que-parfait in this sentence with the examples above:

Tex **avait** (déjà) **commencé** son poème quand son éditeur a téléphoné.

Tex **had begun** his poem when his publisher called.



Remember that the opposite of **déjà** is the **negative** expression **pas encore**, just as 'already' is replaced by 'yet' in English.

Tex **n'avait pas** (**encore**) fini son poème quand son éditeur a téléphoné.

Tex had not (yet) finished his poem when his editor called.

In French and in English alike, the plus-que-parfait is also used to express wishes about the past, as in this example:

Editeur: Si seulement tu **avais fini** ton nouveau poème!

Editor: If only you had finished your new poem! (but you haven't)

The plus-que-parfait is also commonly used in **si clauses** followed by the past conditional. For example:

Tex à son éditeur: Imbécile! Si vous ne m'**aviez pas interrompu**, j'aurais pu finir mon nouveau poème. A cause de vous, je sens que je perds à nouveau mon inspiration.

Tex to his editor: Imbecile! If you had not interrupted me, I would have been able to finish my new poem. Because of you, I'm losing my inspiration again.

Editeur: Mon Dieu, si j'**avais su** combien les artistes étaient difficiles, je serais devenu comptable!

Editor: My God. If I had known how difficult artists were, I'd have become an accountant!



texercises

fill in the blanks

Give the plus-que-parfait of the verb indicated in parentheses.

1. Corey: J' _____ mon film préféré à l'âge de 10 ans. (choisir)
2. Tammy: Bette _____ avec Tex avant la fin de mes cours. (sortir)

3. Joe-Bob: Tex, tu _____ l'anglais avant ton arrivée à Austin, n'est-ce pas? (apprendre)
4. Les parents de Tex _____ sur l'autoroute pendant son absence. (mourir)
5. Paw-Paw _____ amoureux avant la fin de la guerre. (tomber)
6. Fiona: Corey et Joe-Bob, vous _____ deux examens au début du semestre? (rater)
7. A la rentrée, Tammy et Fiona _____ tous les livres scolaires. (acheter)
8. Dès 1990, Tex _____ les grandes oeuvres de la littérature française. (lire)
9. Tammy: Tex et moi, nous _____ le bus avant l'éclat des orages. (prendre)
10. Bette: Hier soir, j' _____ Tex avant l'arrivée de Tammy.(draguer)
11. Trey, avant l'âge de 8 ans _____ le bras plusieurs fois. (se casser)
12. Fiona _____ tant d'étudiants avant son arrivée à UT. (ne pas voir)