

17. Other tenses

1 The pluperfect

1.1 Formation

The pluperfect is formed by using the imperfect tense of *avoir* or *être* with the past participle:

La fois précédente je **l'avais rencontrée** ailleurs

The time before I had met her somewhere else

Avant de la revoir je **m'étais demandé** si ce que je faisais était prudent

Before seeing her again I had asked myself if I was doing the right thing

1.2 Use of the pluperfect

The pluperfect is used when describing something that happened prior to an event that is itself in the past:

Avant de partir, il lui **avait demandé** de téléphoner au garage

Before he went out, he had asked him / her to phone the garage

Je lui **avais déjà dit** d'apporter le livre en cours

I had already told him / her to bring the book to the class

The pluperfect is also used in conditional sentences using *si*:

Si j'**avais su**, je serais venu plus tôt

If I had known, I would have come sooner

Vous auriez été promu si vous **aviez accepté** de travailler à l'étranger

You would have been promoted if you had agreed to work abroad

2 The past historic

Like the perfect, the past historic is used to describe something that has been completed. It is generally only used in written narratives such as novels, biographies and so on, or in formal articles and speeches. **It is not used in conversation or dialogue.** It is formed as follows:

- *-er* verbs: stem + *-ai, -as, -a, -âmes, -âtes, -èrent*
- *-ir* verbs and some *-re* verbs: stem + *-is, -is, -it, -îmes, -îtes, -irent*

Il **finit** l'œuvre en 1887

He finished the work in 1887

Ils **répondirent** aux questions des journalistes

They replied to the journalists' questions

Les Alliées **débarquèrent** en juin 1944

The Allies landed in June 1944

Some irregular conjugations:

avoir: *eus, eus eut, eûmes, eûtes, eurent*

être: *fus, fus, fut, fûmes, fûtes, furent*

venir: *vîns, vîns, vînt, vîmes, vîtes, vinrent*

s'asseoir – <i>m'assis</i>	écrire - <i>écrivis</i>	pouvoir - <i>pus</i>
atteindre - <i>atteignis</i>	faire - <i>fis</i>	prendre - <i>pris</i>
connaître - <i>connus</i>	falloir - <i>il fallut</i>	recevoir - <i>reçus</i>
craindre - <i>craignis</i>	lire - <i>lus</i>	savoir - <i>sus</i>
croire - <i>crus</i>	mettre - <i>mis</i>	vivre - <i>vécus</i>
croître - <i>crûs</i>	naître - <i>naquis</i>	voir - <i>vis</i>
devoir - <i>dus</i>	ouvrir - <i>ouvris</i>	vouloir – <i>voulus</i>

Tout d'un coup il y **eut** un moment de grande confusion

Suddenly there was a moment of great confusion

De Gaulle **fut** Président de la République de 1958 à 1969

De Gaulle was French President from 1958 à 1969

Mozart **mourut** en 1791

Mozart died in 1791