**L'imparfait - The imperfect tense**

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| **The imparfait is used to describe situations in the past.**

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| * Hier, je **faisais** mes devoirs quand ma meilleure amie est venue me voir.
* Yesterday I was doing my homework when my best friend came to see me.
* Le roi **chassait** quand la Révolution a commencé.
* The king was hunting when the Revolution started.
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**The imparfait is formed from a stem and a set of endings.**The stem is the present tense 'nous' form stem:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| porter | nous **port**ons | **port-** |
| finir | nous **finiss**ons | **finiss-** |
| répondre | nous **répond**ons | **répond-** |
| aller | nous **all**ons | **all-** |
| écrire | nous **écriv**ons | **écriv-** |

The only exception is 'être', whose stem is irregular: **ét-**The endings are:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **je** | -ais | **nous** | -ions |
| **tu** | -ais | **vous** | -iez |
| **elle, il, on** | -ait | **elles, ils** | -aient |

For example: **porter** (to carry, to wear) is a regular -er verb

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| the 'nous' form is '**port**ons', so the stem is **port-** |

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| porter |
| je | portais |   | nous | portions |
| tu | portais | vous | portiez |
| elle, il, on | portait | elles, ils | portaient |

**Special cases**Verbs ending in -ger or -cer: Verbs such as 'manger', which end in 'ger', require an extra 'e' in the forms where the ending begins in an 'a': 'je mangeais', 'tu mangeais', 'il mangeait' and 'ils mangeaient' (but 'nous mangions', 'vous mangiez') Verbs such as 'commencer', which end in 'cer', take a c cedilla ('ç') in the forms where the ending begins in an 'a': 'je commençais', 'tu commençais', 'elle commençait', 'elles commençaient' (but 'nous commencions', 'vous commenciez') Étudier, rire, and othersSome verbs have a stem that ends in an 'i'. This means that the 'nous' and the 'vous' forms will have a double 'i' where the stem meets the ending:

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| Nous *étud****ii****ons* quand le prof est entré. Est-ce que vous *r****ii****ez* de moi? |

Don't be deterred! This is quite normal in French, even though it looks a little odd to native English-speakers. |

**Practice:**

Part A. Change these forms into the imparfait form

1. Je frappe (nous form = frappons) Je \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Tu danse (nous form = dansons) Tu \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. Il pense (nous form = pensons) Il \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. Elle prend (nous form = prenons) Elle \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5. Je choisis (nous form = choisissons) Je \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

6. Nous voyons (same) Nous \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

7. Vous avez (nous form = avons) Vous \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

8. Ils vont (nous form = allons) Ils \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

9. Elles veulent (nous form = voulons) Elles \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

10. Nous sommes (irregular = ét-) Nous \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Part B. Change these sentences into the past tense using the imparfait.

1. Je regarde la télé. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Il joue au foot le week-end. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. Nous n'aimons pas aller à cette église. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. Vous avez beaucoup d'amis au lycée. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5. Elles parlent de leurs vacances. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_