



## Italian verbs in the passato prossimo

### Conjugating regular Italian verbs in the Passato Prossimo

The Passato Prossimo is most often used like what we would call the "Simple Past" or "Present Perfect". It is formed by using either the verb *essere* or *avere* in the present tense followed by the past participle of the verb you want to use. For Example if you wanted to say "I ate" you would first conjugate *avere* in the present tense and then follow it with *mangiato*, the past participle for *mangiare*. With the subject pronoun included it would look like this;

#### Io ho mangiato (I ate or I have eaten)

Regular past participles are easy to form. You simply remove the infinitive ending and apply the past participle ending as shown below;

Verbs ending in ARE use ATO, for example; *mangiare* - are = mangi + ato = mangiato

Verbs ending in ERE use UTO, for example; *credere* - ere = cred + uto = creduto

Verbs ending in IRE use ITO, for example; *finire* - ire = fin + ito = finito

There are many verbs that use an irregular past participle. These you will need to commit to memory and many of these can be found on pages 54 & 55 of *Italian Verb Drills* by Paola Nanni-Tate. I like to use math equations as an example but first here are the past participle endings for all regular verbs;

Verbs ending in ARE    Verbs ending in ERE    Verbs ending in IRE

ato

uto

ito

To conjugate the regular ARE verbs in the *passato prossimo* = conjugated auxiliary verb + (infinitive verb – infinitive ending = verb stem + past participle ending) = conjugated verb.  
Example;

**Abbiamo (to have for we) + [Parlare (To Speak) - are = Parl + ato (past participle ending)] =  
Abbiamo Parlato (We spoke or we have spoken)**

Parlare conjugated in the *passato prossimo*

Io	Ho parlato	I spoke or have spoken
Tu	Hai parlato	You spoke or have spoken
Lui/Lei	Ha parlato	He/She/It spoke or has spoken
Noi	Abbiamo parlato	We spoke or have spoken
Voi	Avete parlato	Y'all spoke or have spoken
Loro	Hanno parlato	They spoke or have spoken



To conjugate the regular ERE verbs in the passato prossimo = conjugated auxiliary verb + (infinitive verb – infinitive ending = verb stem + past participle ending) = conjugated verb.

Example;

**Abbiamo (to have for we) + [Credere (To Believe) - ere = Cred + uto (past participle ending)] = Abbiamo Creduto (We believed or we have believed)**

Credere conjugated in the passato prossimo

Io	Ho creduto	I believed or have believed
Tu	Hai creduto	You believed or have believed
Lui/Lei	Ha creduto	He/She/It believed or has believed
Noi	Abbiamo creduto	We believed or have believed
Voi	Avete creduto	Y'all believed or have believed
Loro	Hanno creduto	They believed or have believed

To conjugate the regular IRE verbs in the passato prossimo = conjugated auxiliary verb + (infinitive verb – infinitive ending = verb stem + past participle ending) = conjugated verb.

Example;

**Abbiamo (to have for we) + [Sentire (To Hear) - ire = Sent + ito (past participle ending)] = Abbiamo Sentito (We heard or we have heard)**

Credere conjugated in the passato prossimo

Io	Ho sentito	I heard or have heard
Tu	Hai sentito	You heard or have heard
Lui/Lei	Ha sentito	He/She/It heard or has heard
Noi	Abbiamo sentito	We heard or have heard
Voi	Avete sentito	Y'all heard or have heard
Loro	Hanno sentito	They heard or have heard

## Choosing the correct auxiliary verb when using Passato Prossimo

The book "English Grammar for Students of Italian" says regarding auxiliary verb selection for the Passato Prossimo:

- "1. All transitive verbs (the verbs which can take a direct object...) use the auxiliary avere.*
- 2. All reflexive verbs use the auxiliary essere ...*
- 3. Intransitive verbs ... can use avere or essere ..."*

Due to the third point, some memory work is required to determine which verbs use essere. You can find a list of common verbs conjugated with Essere in the Passato Prossimo on page 53 of the book Verb Drills by Paola Nanni-Tate



It is important to note here than when you use a verb in the Passato Prossimo with the verb essere, the past participle must agree with the subject in gender and number. For example the verb andare or "to go"

Lui è andato (he went) or Lei è andata (she went)

Gli uomini sono andati (the men went) or Le donne sono andate (the women went)

As is always the case with gender when the plural subject is a mix of masculine and feminine you use the masculine. Now lets look at the verb Andare in the passato prossimo = conjugated auxiliary verb + (infinitive verb – infinitive ending = verb stem + past participle ending that agrees in gender and number) = conjugated verb. Example;

**siamo (to be for we) + [Andare (To go) - are = And + ati (past participle ending for masculine plural)] = Siamo Andati (We went or we have gone)**

Andare conjugated in the passato prossimo

Io	Sono andato or andata	I went or have gone
Tu	Sei andato or andata	You went or have gone
Lui/Lei	È andato or andata	He/She/It went or has gone
Noi	Siamo andati or andate	We went or have gone
Voi	Siete andati or andate	Y'all went or have gone
Loro	Sono andati or andate	They went or have gone

**As with all other tenses, there are verbs that are irregular, this time by having irregular past participles. These past participles will have to be committed to memory in order to learn them. A list of the more common irregular past participles will appear in the vocabulary section of this lesson**