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Step by Step Simplified FRENCH GRAMMAR

Booklet 5

L'Imparfait. Qu'est-Ce que C'est? Sample

By

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Grammar Booklet

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Introduction: A Word about Grammar

Grammar. Just saying or reading the word makes most of the learners panic! People have a negative feeling about French grammar. They have heard about irregular verbs, weird tenses, nouns and gender...

That's why this booklet concentrates only on one grammar subject and is compiled with only very simplified grammatical points.

You will be guided step by step and all the points are defined and explained.

At the end of each mini lesson, you will be able to test your knowledge and learn new vocabulary by working with cultural and authentic literary texts.

Grammar, which knows how to control even kings.” Molière

When is the Imperfect used?

1. Translated in English by **was** or **was + V-ing**.
2. It is more used **written** than spoken. It is the tense used in **literature** to describe past actions.
3. To describe a **repeated or incomplete action at the past tense**.
 - ➔ Tous les étés, je travaillais dans un hôtel. *Every summer, I used to work in a hotel.*
4. The **beginning and end of the action** are often **not specified**.
 - ➔ Je marchais pendant des heures sans retrouver mon chemin. *I was walking for hours without finding my way back.*
5. To describe **feelings, weather, time, age in the past**.
 - ➔ Tous les étés, il pleuvait. *Every summer, it was raining.*
6. To express **wishes**.
 - ➔ Ah! Si j'étais président! Ah! *If I were president!*
7. To express **suggestions**.
 - ➔ Si tu venais demain soir, nous pourrions aller au cinéma. *If you come tomorrow evening, we could go to the cinema.*
8. To express **the condition (if...)**
 - ➔ Si je pouvais, je le ferais. *If I could, I would.*

How do you conjugate at the Imperfect a regular verb of the -ER group (premier groupe)?

The first group verbs are all the ones which end up with **-ER** at the infinitive.

To conjugate an **-ER verb** at the imperfect, remove the ending **-ER** and add the appropriate endings:

- ais
- ais
- ait
- ions
- iez
- aient

TIP: When the subject is **tu**, the verb always ends with an **S**

✘ Let's take the verb **louer** (to rent)

▶ remove the infinitive ending **-ER** to get **lou** and add the endings:

LOUER	Singulier	Pluriel
1 ^{ère} personne	Je louais	Nous louions
2 ^{ème} personne	Tu louais	Vous louiez
3 ^{ème} personne	Il/ Elle/On louait	Ils/Elles louaient

How do you conjugate at the Imperfect a regular verb of the -IR group (deuxième groupe)?

The second group verbs are all the ones which end up with **-IR** at the infinitive and that have a present participle ending in **-issant**.

To conjugate an **-IR** verb at the present tense, remove the ending **-IR** and add **-ISS** and then the appropriate endings.

- ✗ Let's take the verb **grandir** (to grow up)
 - ▶ remove the infinitive ending **-IR** to get **grand** and add the endings:

GRANDIR	Singulier	Pluriel
1 ^{ère} personne	Je grandissais	Nous grandissions
2 ^{ème} personne	Tu grandissais	Vous grandissiez
3 ^{ème} personne	Il/ Elle/On grandissait	Ils/Elles grandissaient

How do you conjugate at the Imperfect a verb of the -RE group (troisième groupe)?

The third group verbs are all the verbs not belonging either to the first or the second group and that are not auxiliary verbs (être & avoir). Most of them are irregular verbs.

- ✗ Let's take the verb **vendre** (to sell)

VENDRE	Singulier	Pluriel
1 ^{ère} personne	Je vendais	Nous vendions
2 ^{ème} personne	Tu vendais	Vous vendiez
3 ^{ème} personne	Il/ Elle/On vendait	Ils/Elles vendaient

✗ Let's take the verb **battre** (to beat, to defeat)

BATTRE	Singulier	Pluriel
1 ^{ère} personne	Je battais	Nous battions
2 ^{ème} personne	Tu battais	Vous battiez
3 ^{ème} personne	Il/ Elle/On battait	Ils/Elles battaient

✗ The verbs **vouloir** (to want) and **pouvoir** (to be able to) :

VOULOIR	Singulier	Pluriel
1 ^{ère} personne	Je voulais	Nous voulions
2 ^{ème} personne	Tu voulais	Vous vouliez
3 ^{ème} personne	Il/ Elle/On voulait	Ils/Elles voulaient

POUVOIR	Singulier	Pluriel
1 ^{ère} personne	Je pouvais	Nous pouvions
2 ^{ème} personne	Tu pouvais	Vous pouviez
3 ^{ème} personne	Il/ Elle/On pouvait	Ils/Elles pouvaient

✗ The verb **faire** (to do):

FAIRE	Singulier	Pluriel
1 ^{ère} personne	Je faisais	Nous faisons
2 ^{ème} personne	Tu faisais	Vous faisiez
3 ^{ème} personne	Il/ Elle/On faisait	Ils/Elles faisaient

✗ The verb **dire** (to say):

DIRE	Singulier	Pluriel
1 ^{ère} personne	Je disais	Nous disions
2 ^{ème} personne	Tu disais	Vous disiez
3 ^{ème} personne	Il/ Elle/On disait	Ils/Elles disaient

