**THE PLUPERFECT** **le plus-que-parfait**

The pluperfect is a relatively straight forward tense, once you have mastered the perfect tense that is. Have a look at these examples in both English and French:

**1** she had never learnt French at school elle n’**avait** jamais appris le français à l’école **2**  by 10 o’clock, I had had enough à 10 heures, j’en **avais** eu assez **3** it’s the first time they had ever seen her c’était la première fois qu’ils l’avaient vu**e** **4** by the time I arrived, she had gone quand j’y suis arrivé, elle **était** déjà partie **5** my sisters had had a good time mes sœurs **s’étaient** beaucoup amusés

As you can see, it looks very similar to the perfect tense but can you spot the obvious difference?

Yes, I’m sure you’ve spotted it: it’s the auxiliary verb (avoir or être) that ‘s changed– they are both in the **imperfect** as compared to the present tense, which is what you’d expect in the perfect tense. Otherwise, the pluperfect works in **exactly the same way** as the perfect with avoir (**1** + **2**) and être verbs (**4**), reflexives (**5**), negatives (**1**) and direct object pronouns agreeing (**3**). All irregular past participles in the perfect tense are exactly the same in the pluperfect.

Do you remember how to conjugate avoir & être in the imperfect? Have a go now: **avoir être** j’ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\*\* tu \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\*\* il/elle/on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\*\* nous \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ vous \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ils/elles \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\*\*

**\*** these are all pronounced the same **\*\*** these are all pronounced in exactly the same way

So what is the difference then between the pluperfect and the perfect in usage? Well, the **pluperfect** is used to express an event or situation **further back in time** than the perfect tense: something that **had** happened as opposed to **has** happened. **Have a go:**

1. I hadn’t noticed the difference (remarquer) je n’\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ pas \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ la différence
2. They had left too early (partir) ils \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_trop tôt
3. We had got terribly bored (s’embêter) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_vraiment\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. The journey had not been easy le voyage\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ facile
5. They had all had fun (s’amuser) elles\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. I had never seen it (la Tour Eiffel) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. She had been born poor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ pauvre
8. They hadn’t got ready on time \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ à l’heure
9. We’d had problems with him before\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_auparavant

**Have a go at these si clauses - what tense do you think is needed to follow the pluperfect? #**

1. If we had had the time, we would have gone to the Louvre

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1. If I had got the money, I would have gone to the Caribbean

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**#** I’m sure you’ve worked it out: the pluperfect is followed by the perfect conditional!