

# WHEN DOES THE PAST PARTICIPLE AGREE WITH THE SUBJECT/OBJECT IN THE PASSATO PROSSIMO?

This is an **intermediate** topic so don't let it scare you if you are a beginner. Also, this lesson will assume a working knowledge of the **PASSATO PROSSIMO**.

## ▷ **First things first!**

The **Italian Passato Prossimo** looks just like the **English Present Perfect** (I have worked, I have seen, I have gone), but it translates both the **English Simple Past** (I worked, I saw, I went) and the **English Present Perfect**.

Since it "*looks*" and works almost like the English Present Perfect, we have to understand that there are always **TWO components to an Italian Passato Prossimo**:

### ▷ **AN AUXILIARY VERB**

### ▷ **A PAST PARTICIPLE**

The same thing happens **in English**:

▷ **THE AUXILIARY VERB** is always the verb TO HAVE

▷ **THE PAST PARTICIPLE** is created by added **-ED** to the verb (work-ed, ponder-ed, paint-ed), **unless it's irregular** (seen, done, drunken, eaten)

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In Italian there are **TWO possible auxiliary verbs**:

▷ **ESSERE (TO BE)**

▷ **AVERE (TO HAVE)**

We use **AVERE** for all **transitive verbs** (verbs that need an object to make sense - "*to paint*"... you gotta paint something, right? - "*to love*"... you gotta love something or somebody, right? - "*to speak*"... you gotta speak words, right?).

We use **ESSERE** for all **intransitive verbs** (verbs that do not take an object and the action refers back to the subject - "*to die*"... you can't "*die somebody*", right? - "*to go*"... it's about you going, you are moving yourself, not another person).

The Italian way to create a **Past Participle** is by:

▷ removing the **-ARE, -ERE or -IRE ending** from the **infinitive**

▷ **Attaching** one of the **following endings**:

- **ATO** (for -ARE verbs)

- **UTO** (for -ERE verbs)

- **ITO** (for -IRE verbs)

For example:

**PARLARE -> PARLATO**

**CREDERE -> CREDUTO**

**FINIRE -> FINITO**

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Please note that we **CANNOT use these past participles on their own** to speak in the past. We always **need an auxiliary verb before** them!

*Ho parlato*

I have spoken / I spoke

*Abbiamo finito*

we have finished / we finished

### ▷ **So, when is there agreement?**

First of all, by "agreement" of the **Past Participle** we mean this:

*Ieri Maria è andata a Roma*

Yesterday Maria went to Rome

You see what happened? The **Past Participle** of **ANDARE**, which is **ANDATO**, **changed** to a **feminine!!!!**

*Stamattina ci siamo svegliati tardi*

This morning we woke up late

And now the **Past Participle** of **SVEGLIARSI** (to wake up), **SVEGLIATO**, has **changed** to a **plural!!!!**

## ▷ And here are the rules!

▷ when the **auxiliary** verb is **ESSERE** there is **AGREEMENT**

▷ when the **auxiliary** verb is **AVERE** there is **NO AGREEMENT**

▷ when the **auxiliary** verb is **AVERE** and we use a **direct object pronoun before the verb**, there is **AGREEMENT**

## ▷ First case: ESSERE

When the **auxiliary** verb is **ESSERE** there is **AGREEMENT**

Any time we are using a verb in the **passato prossimo** and this verb uses **ESSERE** as the **auxiliary**, then the **Past Participle** will have all **4 options** (same as an adjective):

- masculine singular
- feminine singular
- masculine plural
- feminine plural

## ▷ For example:

*Io sono andato* (singular masculine subject)

I went

*Io sono andata* (singular feminine subject)

I went

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*Noi siamo andati* (plural masculine subject)

We went

*Noi siamo andate* (plural feminine subject)

We went

*Sono uscito*

I, male, went out

*Sei uscita*

You, female, went out

*L'aereo è partito*

The airplane left

*La macchina è partita*

The car left

### ▷ ALL REFLEXIVE VERBS USE ESSERE AS THE AUXILIARY VERB

For example, the verb **SVEGLIARSI** (to wake up) in the **passato prossimo** would look like this:

*Mi sono svegliato* (singular masculine subject)

I woke up

*Mi sono svegliata* (singular feminine subject)

I woke up

*Ci siamo svegliati* (plural masculine subject)

We woke up

*Ci siamo svegliate* (plural feminine subject)

We woke up

The verb **VEDERSI** (to see each other) would go:

*Ci siamo visti*

we saw each other

### ▷ **Second case: AVERE**

When the **auxiliary** verb is **AVERE** there is **NO AGREEMENT**

When the verb we want to express in the past uses **AVERE** as the auxiliary we do not worry about changing the past participle. No matter who/what the subject or the object is.

*Lui ha mangiato la pizza*

He ate (the) pizza

*Lei ha mangiato la pizza*

She ate (the) pizza

*Daniele e Marco hanno mangiato il pane*

They ate (the) bread

*Sandra e Gina hanno mangiato il pane*

They ate (the) bread

As you can see **MANGIATO** did **NOT change** to MANGIATA or MANGIATI or MANGIATE. Nope.

*Noi abbiamo visto Enrico*

We saw Enrico (a man)

*Noi abbiamo visto Marta*

We saw Marta (a woman)

## ▷ **Third case: AVERE with pronouns**

When the **auxiliary** verb is **AVERE** and we use a **direct object pronoun before the verb**, there is **AGREEMENT**

When we speak in the **Passato Prossimo** and the verb uses **AVERE** as the **auxiliary AND** we use a **Direct Object Pronoun before the verb** (which is where object pronouns go in Italian!) **THERE IS AGREEMENT between the Past Participle and the Object** of the verb.

That's because we put the object **BEFORE the verb**, so this creates the expectation of **GENDER** and **NUMBER**.

*Io ti ho visto*

I saw you - "you" is a man

*Io ti ho vista*

I saw you - "you" is a woman

*Tu l'hai mangiato*

You ate it - "it" is a masculine object

*Tu l'hai mangiata*

You ate it - "it" is a feminine object

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*Tu li hai mangiati*

You ate them - "them" is a masculine object plural

*Tu le hai mangiate*

You ate them - "them" is a feminine object plural

## ▷ The direct object pronouns are...

**MI**

**TI**

**LO - LA**

**CI**

**VI**

**LI - LE**

And they **translate** the English **direct objects**:

**ME**

**YOU**

**IT / HIM / HER**

**US**

**YOU plural**

**THEM**



### ▷ For example...

If we've been talking about eating a sandwich, and then we just want to use a pronoun to refer to it ("it" in English), this would happen:

*Ho mangiato il panino*

**IL PANINO:** would be replaced with the **pronoun LO** (masculine singular)

Then we'd say:

*Lo ho mangiato*

it I have eaten

In reality we'll say:

**L'ho** mangiato

*Ho mangiato la mela*

**LA MELA:** would be replaced with the **pronoun LA** (feminine singular)

Then we'd say:

*La ho mangiata*

it I have eaten

In reality we'll say:

**L'ho** mangiata

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*Ho mangiato i panini*

**I PANINI:** would be replaced with the **pronoun LI** (masculine plural)

Then we'd say:

*Li ho mangiati*

them I have eaten

We **never abbreviate** the **plural pronouns**.

*Ho mangiato le mele*

**LE MELE:** would be replaced with the **pronoun LE** (feminine plural)

Then we'd say:

*Le ho mangiati*

them I have eaten

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## ▷ EXERCISE

### Which is the correct version?

1a. Ieri abbiamo mangiati i dolci

1b. Ieri abbiamo mangiato i dolci

2a. Sandra è arrivato tardi

2b. Sandra è arrivata tardi

3a. Non li ho visto

3b. Non li ho visti

3c. Non li ho viste

4a. Sara e Francesca si sono alzato

4b. Sara e Francesca si sono alzata

4c. Sara e Francesca si sono alzate

5a. La macchina? Sì, l'ho comprato ieri!

5b. La macchina? Sì, l'ho comprata ieri!

## ▷ ANSWERS

Here are the correct sentences:

- 1a. Ieri abbiamo mangiati i dolci
- 2b. Sandra è arrivata tardi
- 3b. Non li ho visti
- 4c. Sara e Francesca si sono alzate
- 5b. La macchina? Sì, l'ho comprata ieri!

## ▷ YOUR NOTES