

What is Passé Simple?

Worksheet

Passé Simple describes completed past actions in formal writing, formed differently for -er, -ir, and -re verbs: -ai/-as/-a/-âmes/-âtes/-èrent for -er; -is/-is/-it/-îmes/-îtes/-irent for -ir/-re.

Questions

1. Conjugate 'manger' in Passé Simple for je.
A) je mangeai
B) je mangai
C) je mangeais
D) je mangerais
2. What is the Passé Simple form of 'être' for il/elle?
A) il est
B) il était
C) il fut
D) il a été
3. Which -ir verb conjugation is Passé Simple?
A) je finissais
B) je finirai
C) je finis (present)
D) je finis (passé simple)
4. 'Elle rentra à neuf heures.' What does this indicate about tense?
A) Ongoing past
B) Habitual past
C) Completed narrative past
D) Recent completed past
5. Conjugate 'parler' in Passé Simple for il/elle and ils/elles.
6. Write 'Il vit (he saw) la maison blanche' in Passé Simple. What's the base?
7. Conjugate 'entendre' (to hear) for je and nous in Passé Simple.
8. Define: When is Passé Simple used?
9. Define: How do regular -er verbs conjugate in Passé Simple?
10. Define: Passé Simple vs. Passé Composé?

Answer Key

1. A) je mangeai — Je mangeai — note the 'e' before 'ai' to preserve soft c sound in -er verbs.
2. C) il fut — Il fut (he was) — être has an irregular stem 'f-' in Passé Simple.
3. D) je finis (passé simple) — Passé Simple -ir uses -is endings (je finis, tu finis, il finit, etc.).
4. C) Completed narrative past — Rentra is Passé Simple — suggests formal narrative or historical account.
5. Il/elle parla Ils/elles parlèrent (Regular -er: drop -er, add -a / -èrent)
6. Base: voir (to see) Passé Simple: vit, virent (Irregular; from past stem vi-)
7. Je entendis Nous entendîmes (Regular -re: drop -re, add -is / -îmes)
8. In formal, literary, or historical writing to describe completed past actions. Rarely in spoken French.
9. Drop -er, add: -ai (je), -as (tu), -a (il/elle), -âmes (nous), -âtes (vous), -èrent (ils/elles).
10. Passé Composé = everyday speech (j'ai parlé); Passé Simple = formal narrative (je parlai).

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