The Passé Composé 1

Passé composé means *compound past*. *Compound* means *two words*. On this page, PC means passé composé.

This is the *conversational* past tense. The *imperfect* is also important; we'll study it later. The *passé simple* is only used in literature.

Thr PC consists of a helping verb (*avoir* or *être;* both translated by *have* in English.(*) AND a past participle.

J'*ai fini* mon travail. I (have) finished my work.
Je *suis allé* au concert. I have gone (I went) to the concert. (**)

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(*) The PC can also be translated with the English simple past.

(**) There are 14 basic "être-verbs": *aller* is one of them. They all show a change of position, like *aller* OR a change of condition, like *mourir* (to die). All of them are common. The one exception is *rester* (to stay or remain). Amazingly, this same verb is also an être-verb in German and Italian (I don't know why). There are no être-verbs in Spanish.

Past participles of —er verbs (class 1) end in —é (allé, parlé, écouté)
   "   "   of —ir verbs (class 2) end in —i (fini, parti, dormi)
   "   "   of —re verbs (class 3) end in —u (vendu, entendu)

Translate:

1)   I have spoken French OR I spoke French. (parler)
2)   He has departed OR He departed. (partir)
3)   She has sold the car OR She sold the car. (vdndre)
4)   Have you finished the exam? OR Did you finish the exam? (finir)