

WHAT IS PASSATO PROSSIMO?

In English it translates to present perfect, and it's used to talk about the past in Italian. It's a compound tense because it's formed by the auxiliary verb (either *essere* or *avere*) and the past participle (*participio passato*). For example, *ho* (auxiliary verb *avere*) *mangiato* (past participle), *I ate*.

WHAT IS IMPERFETTO?

In English it translates to imperfect, and it's used to talk about the past in Italian. It's a simple tense because it's simply formed by the main verb. For example, *mangiavo*, *I ate*.

PASSATO PROSSIMO	IMPERFETTO
General rules	
✓ To talk about actions or events that are finished in the past. ✓ Il Milan ha vinto la partita. <i>Milan won the game.</i>	✓ To talk about repetitive actions or events in past. ✓ Da piccola andavo dai nonni ogni domenica. <i>When I was little I used to go to my grandparent's every Sunday.</i>
Specific rules	
✓ To list a series of past actions or events. ✓ Ho mangiato, poi ho guardato la tele e infine sono andata a dormire. <i>I ate, then I watched TV, and at last I went to sleep.</i>	✓ For actions or events that happened at the same time in the past. ✓ Mentre io cucinavo, Vittorio giocava. <i>While I cooked, Vittorio played.</i>
✓ To indicate the beginning or the end of a past action or event. ✓ Il film è iniziato alle 21. <i>The movie started at 9 PM.</i>	✓ To express an ongoing past action or event that doesn't have a clear beginning or ending point. ✓ Preferivo correre. <i>I preferred running.</i>
✓ To express changes in past emotional, mental, or physical states. ✓ Mi sono ammalata perché non ho messo la giacca. <i>I got sick because I didn't wear the jacket.</i>	✓ To describe past emotional, mental, or physical states, including age. ✓ Quando ero incinta mangiavo molte patate. <i>When I was pregnant I ate many potatoes.</i>
✓ With words like: <i>stamattina, tutto il giorno, ieri, due giorni fa, la settimana scorsa, il mese passato, una volta, per un anno, per due anni.</i> ✓ Ieri ho mangiato gli spaghetti. <i>Yesterday I ate spaghetti.</i>	✓ With words like: <i>mentre, sempre, di solito, spesso, ogni giorno, ogni settimana, ogni mese.</i> ✓ Mangiavo sempre un panino a pranzo. <i>I always ate a sandwich for lunch.</i>

WHEN ARE PASSATO PROSSIMO AND IMPERFETTO USED TOGETHER?

There are instances when these two tenses can be used together in a sentence to narrate a past event.

- ✓ The imperfetto is used for the action that is ongoing in the past.
- ✓ The passato prossimo is used for the action that interrupts the ongoing one.
- ✓ Mentre **pulivo**, **è saltata** la corrente. *While I cleaned, the electricity went out.*