

SCENE 43 • GRAMMAR

Événements au passé

Putting events in order

6 Exercises • Duration: 20 min.

The festival

French

Read & listen online



Putting events in order

For story events, French often uses short action verbs in the **passé composé**: **a commencé, est tombé, a crié, a touché**. These are perfect for reporting what happened, step by step.

With many verbs, French uses **avoir**: **j'ai crié, quelque chose a touché ma jambe**. Some movement or change verbs use **être**: **le tambour est tombé**. At this level, it is enough to learn the common ones from the story.

A direct object can come before the verb in sentences like **Je l'ai entendue**. Then the past participle may agree in writing. Here **l'** replaces **la trompette**, so we write **entendue** with **-e**. This is useful to notice, but at A1 you can first learn the full chunk.

Keep past reporting simple: one clause for one event. Example:
Les lumières se sont éteintes. Julien a joué. Thomas a dansé.

Form	Example	Meaning
a commencé	Le concert a commencé.	started
est tombé	Le tambour est tombé.	fell
a crié	Thomas a crié.	screamed
a touché	Quelque chose a touché ma jambe.	touched my leg

Le concert a commencé à 20 h 00.

The concert started at 20:00.

Le tambour est tombé dans le noir.

The drum fell in the dark.

Thomas a crié très fort.

Thomas screamed very loudly.

Quelque chose a touché sa jambe.

Something touched his leg.

Les lumières se sont éteintes à 20 h 14.

The lights went out at 20:14.

Moi aussi, je l'ai entendue.

I heard it too.

Je suis tombée (tombé) ? Non, je ne suis pas tombée (tombé).

Did I fall? No, I didn't fall.

La photo a montré le chat sur le tambour.

The photo showed the cat on the drum.

GRAMMAR**G1) NOTICE THE USEFUL PATTERN**

Underline the form practised in this unit.

- 1 Le concert a commencé à 20 h 00.

Meaning: The concert started at 20:00.

- 2 Le tambour est tombé dans le noir.

Meaning: The drum fell in the dark.

- 3 Thomas a crié très fort.

Meaning: Thomas screamed very loudly.

- 4 Quelque chose a touché sa jambe.

Meaning: Something touched his leg.

G2) CHOOSE THE FORM

Use the English meaning and the pattern in this unit.

1 Le concert _____ à 20 h 00.

- ☐ (A) commence
- ☐ (B) a commencé
- ☐ (C) commençait

Meaning: The concert started at 20:00.

2 Le tambour _____ dans le noir.

- ☐ (A) tombe
- ☐ (B) est tombé
- ☐ (C) a tombé

Meaning: The drum fell in the dark.

3 Thomas _____ très fort.

- ☐ (A) a crier
- ☐ (B) a crié
- ☐ (C) criait

Meaning: Thomas screamed very loudly.

4 Quelque chose _____ sa jambe.

- ☐ A touchait
- ☐ B a touché
- ☐ C est touché

Meaning: Something touched his leg.

5 Les lumières _____ à 20 h 14.

- ☐ A ont éteint
- ☐ B se sont éteintes
- ☐ C s'éteignent

Meaning: The lights went out at 20:14.

6 Moi aussi, je l'_____.

- ☐ A ai entendu
- ☐ B ai entendus
- ☐ C ai entendue

Meaning: I heard it too.

7 Je _____ ? Non, je ne suis pas tombée.

- ☐ (A) tombe
- ☐ (B) ai tombé
- ☐ (C) suis tombée

Meaning: Did I fall? No, I didn't fall.

8 La photo _____ le chat sur le tambour.

- ☐ (A) montre
- ☐ (B) montrait
- ☐ (C) a montré

Meaning: The photo showed the cat on the drum.

G3) COMPLETE THE MESSAGES

Fill the gaps with the words from the box.

a crié criait

Thomas _____ très fort.

Meaning: Thomas screamed very loudly.

a touché touchait

Quelque chose _____ sa jambe.

Meaning: Something touched his leg.

se sont éteintes ont éteint

Les lumières _____ à 20 h 14.

Meaning: The lights went out at 20:14.

ai entendue ai entendu

Moi aussi, je l'_____.

Meaning: I heard it too.

suis tombée ai tombé

Je _____ ? Non, je ne suis pas tombée.

Meaning: Did I fall? No, I didn't fall.

a montré montre

La photo _____ le chat sur le tambour.

Meaning: The photo showed the cat on the drum.

G4) BUILD A SENTENCE

Put the words in order.

1 à 20 00. concert h Le a commencé

Meaning: The concert started at 20:00.

2 Le tambour dans noir. est le tombé

Meaning: The drum fell in the dark.

3 Thomas a très fort. crié

Meaning: Thomas screamed very loudly.

4 sa Quelque jambe. chose touché a

Meaning: Something touched his leg.

5 sont 20 se à Les h 14. éteintes lumières

Meaning: The lights went out at 20:14.

6

aussi,

Moi

je

l'ai

entendue.

Meaning: I heard it too.

G5) WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

Choose the right words for the situation.

1 The concert started at 20:00. You say:

- ☐ A Le concert commençait à 20 h 00.
- ☐ B Le concert a commencé à 20 h 00.

2 The drum fell in the dark. You say:

- ☐ A Le tambour est tombé dans le noir.
- ☐ B Le tambour a tombé dans le noir.

3 Thomas screamed very loudly. You say:

- ☐ A Thomas a crié très fort.
- ☐ B Thomas criait très fort.

4 Something touched his leg. You say:

- (A) Quelque chose a touché sa jambe.
- (B) Quelque chose touchait sa jambe.

G6) CONNECT MESSAGES AND MEANINGS

Match the pairs.

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| (1) Les lumières se
sont éteintes à 20 h
14. | (A) I heard it too. |
| (2) Quelque chose a
touché sa jambe. | (B) The concert started at 20:00. |
| (3) Je suis tombée ?
Non, je ne suis pas
tombée. | (C) The drum fell in the dark. |
| (4) La photo a montré
le chat sur le
tambour. | (D) The lights went out at 20:14. |

- | | |
|--|--|
| ⑤ Le concert a
commencé à 20 h
00. | ⑤ The photo showed the cat on
the drum. |
| ⑥ Moi aussi, je l'ai
entendue. | ⑥ Thomas screamed very loudly. |
| ⑦ Thomas a crié très
fort. | ⑦ Did I fall? No, I didn't fall. |
| ⑧ Le tambour est
tombé dans le noir. | ⑧ Something touched his leg. |