
Passato Prossimo Review #9

Past Tense of Reflexive / Reciprocal / Impersonal Verbs)

Now that you know enough about the Italian past tense, **Passato Prossimo**, we will start to look at the past tense of **Reflexive**, **Reciprocal** and **Impersonal Verbs**, or, **Verbi Riflessivi, Reciproci e Impersonali**.

Reflexive, **Reciprocal** and **Impersonal Verbs** are **Intransitive Verbs** and they use **ESSERE** as the **Auxiliary Verb** in the **Passato Prossimo**.

As you recall, many **Intransitive Verbs** can use **ESSERE** in the **Passato Prossimo**, but not all of them, as quite a few **Intransitive Verbs** use **AVERE**. These variations are something you will just have to memorize on a per-verb basis. We did learn a quick, unofficial, non bullet-proof way of checking what Auxiliary a verb is likely to use, but that doesn't always work, sadly.

If you need a refresher on how to do this, please refer back to **Lesson 50**.

Manu, we need more certainties!

Ok, let me give you one:

ALL **Reflexive Verbs** (or verbs used "Reflexively"), will use **ESSERE** in the **Passato Prossimo**.

Same goes for **Reciprocal** verbs and **Impersonal** statements.



Passato Prossimo of Reflexive Verbs

In order to use **Reflexive Verbs** in the **Passato Prossimo**, we need 3 things:

1) Reflexive Pronouns

MI	<i>myself</i>
TI	<i>yourself</i>
SI	<i>himself, herself, itself, oneself</i>
CI	<i>ourselves</i>
VI	<i>yourselves (you plural)</i>
SI	<i>themselves</i>

2) Verb **ESSERE** in the Present Tense

SONO	<i>subject is</i>	IO
SEI	<i>subject is</i>	TU
È	<i>subject is</i>	LUI/LEI
SIAMO	<i>subject is</i>	NOI
SIETE	<i>subject is</i>	VOI
SONO	<i>subject is</i>	LORO

3) Past Participle, with Agreement with the Subject

If the verb is Regular, you can assume this to be a word that ends in:

- ATO
- UTO
- ITO

This is done by removing the verb ending (**-ARE**, **-ERE**, or **-IRE**) from the infinitive of the verb, and attaching the matching ending (**PARLATO** > **PARLATO**, **SPEAK** > **SPOKEN**).

If the verb is Irregular:

Unfortunately we cannot predict what an **Irregular Past Participle** is going to be. What is even worse is that there is no way of knowing if a verb is going to have an irregular Past Participle! That is why you **(1)** must memorize the **Irregular Past Participles** you are likely to need, and **(2)** are better off assuming a verb has a **Regular Past Participle**, in case you are not sure!



Together the Passato Prossimo of a Reflexive Verb will look like this:

Reflexive Pronoun + Verb ESSERE (Present Tense) + Past Participle (with Agreement)

LAVARSI

To wash oneself

Mi sono lavato/a

I washed myself

Ti sei lavato/a

You washed yourself

Si è lavato/a

He washed himself, she washed herself

Ci siamo lavati/e

We washed ourselves

Vi siete lavati/e

You all washed yourselves

Si sono lavati/e

They all washed themselves

As you can see, I did not express subjects of those verbs (IO, TU, LEI etc).

Why Manu?

Because, both the pronoun and the conjugated form of **ESSERE** tell us who the subject is!

What else do we notice?

The first 3 examples are in the singular:

Mi sono lavato

I washed myself

Ti sei lavato

You washed yourself

Si è lavato

He washed himself

And the last 3 examples are in the plural:

Ci siamo lavati

We washed ourselves

Vi siete lavati

You all washed yourselves

Si sono lavati

They all washed themselves

What happens when the subject is a woman / feminine?

We just use the feminine version of all the **Past Participle**. Everything else stays the same.



LAVARSI (feminine)

Mi sono <u>lavata</u>	<i>I washed myself (woman)</i>
Ti sei <u>lavata</u>	<i>You washed yourself (woman)</i>
S'è <u>lavata</u>	<i>She washed herself (woman)</i>
Ci siamo <u>lavate</u>	<i>We washed ourselves (women)</i>
Vi siete <u>lavate</u>	<i>You all washed yourselves (women)</i>
Si sono <u>lavate</u>	<i>They washed themselves (women)</i>

Practice

Now try to do the same as we just did with the following **Reflexive Verbs**:

VESTIRSI	TO GET DRESSED
ARRABBIARSI	TO GET ANGRY
RIPOSARSI	TO REST
SPOSARSI	TO GET MARRIED

VESTIRSI

Mi sono vestito/a	<i>I dressed myself</i>
Ti sei vestito/a	<i>You dressed yourself</i>
Si è vestito/a	<i>He / She dressed himself / herself</i>
Ci siamo vestiti/e	<i>We dressed ourselves</i>
Vi siete vestiti/e	<i>You all dressed yourselves</i>
Si sono vestiti/e	<i>They all dressed themselves</i>

ARRABBIARSI

Mi sono arrabbiato/a	<i>I got angry</i>
Ti sei arrabbiato/a	<i>You got angry</i>
Si è arrabbiato/a	<i>He / She got angry</i>
Ci siamo arrabbiati/e	<i>We got angry</i>
Vi siete arrabbiati/e	<i>You all got angry</i>
Si sono arrabbiati/e	<i>They all got angry</i>



RIPOSARSI

Mi sono riposato/a	<i>I rested</i>
Ti sei riposato/a	<i>You rested</i>
Si è riposato/a	<i>He / She rested</i>
Ci siamo riposati/e	<i>We rested</i>
Vi siete riposati/e	<i>You all rested</i>
Si sono riposati/e	<i>They all rested</i>

SPOSARSI

Mi sono sposato/a	<i>I got married</i>
Ti sei sposato/a	<i>You got married</i>
Si è sposato/a	<i>He / She got married</i>
Ci siamo sposati/e	<i>We got married</i>
Vi siete sposati/e	<i>You all got married</i>
Si sono sposati/e	<i>They all got married</i>

A Trick

I know it seems like a lot to remember, but when you break it down, you realize that whenever you are using **Reflexive Verbs** in the **Passato Prossimo**, the beginning will always be the same - no matter what the reflexive verb is.

Mi sono	<i>when you want to express: IO + Past Participle (masculine / feminine)</i>
Ti sei	<i>when you want to express: TU + Past Participle (masculine / feminine)</i>
S'è	<i>when you want to express: LUI / LEI + Past Participle (masculine / feminine)</i>
Ci siamo	<i>when you want to express: NOI + Past Participle (masculine / feminine)</i>
Vi siete	<i>when you want to express: VOI + Past Participle (masculine / feminine)</i>
Si sono	<i>when you want to express: LORO + Past Participle (masculine / feminine)</i>

Remember, just like with the verb **PIACERE**, there are limited options when expressing **Reflexive Verbs** in the **Passato Prossimo**. So, the more you say these variations out loud, the better you will understand them and remember them.



Reciprocal Verbs work the same as Reflexive Verbs

That's it! That is why we never make a big fuss about **Reciprocal Verbs**. It's just a technicality and a complication that we don't need. Very few Italians even know the difference!

As a reminder, a **Reciprocal Verb** is something like **SPOSARSI** or **ABBRACCIARSI**, where, when used with plural subjects/pronouns, the implication is NOT that the subject is performing the action onto itself (like for standard **Reflexive Verbs**), but rather than the action is performed **TO** or **WITH EACH OTHER**.

CI ARRABBIAMO is a **Reflexive Verb** and it corresponds to the English *WE GET ANGRY*.

CI SPOSIAMO is a **Reciprocal Verb**, and it corresponds to the English *WE MARRY EACH OTHER*.

Or better... **CI SPOSIAMO** can be used as both a standard **Reflexive Verb** and as a **Reciprocal Verb**, depending on the context and the speaker's intended meaning!

If three friends all have planned their weddings for this year, they might say:

Ci sposiamo quest'anno

Since they are NOT getting married to each other, but to three other people, the sentence was using the verb **SPOSARSI** as a **Reflexive Verb**.

Conversely, if two lovers plan to marry each other, they will still say:

Ci sposiamo quest'anno

But in this latter example, the verb **SPOSARSI** is a **Reciprocal Verb**. Still Reflexive, but also Reciprocal.

Now you see why we should not worry about the distinction between **Reflexive and Reciprocal Verbs**. Save the headache for more serious grammatical issues!



Impersonal Statements in the Passato Prossimo

Now that we have discussed in detail how to use **Reflexive Verbs** in the **Passato Prossimo**, I will tell you what you need to think about when using **Impersonal Statements** in the **Passato Prossimo**. Please note that this is a pretty complex topic and you are NOT required or expected to be good at this at your level!

Just like when we talked about Impersonal Statements in the Present Tense, the main thing is that you are aware of how Impersonal Statements work and are somehow capable of spotting them when Italians use them!

Need a refresher on **Impersonal Statements**?

Impersonal Statements use the **Verb** in the third person, singular or plural with the **Impersonal Pronoun SI**, in front of it. We use the singular or plural of the verb depending on what the **OBJECT** is.

Qui si parla italiano	<i>Here, we speak Italian / Italian is spoken here</i>
Si vende una casa	<i>There is a house on sale / someone is selling a house</i>
Si vedono le Alpi	<i>The Alps can be seen from here / you can see the Alps from here</i>
Ci si conosce meglio	<i>We get to know each other better</i>

In the Passato Prossimo, we will use the following structure:

Auxiliary Verb ESSERE (Present Tense)

+

Past Participle (that agrees with gender and number with the apparent OBJECT)

Since it is the OBJECT that determines whether a verb used in an **Impersonal Statement** is singular or plural, it kinda makes sense that it is the OBJECT that determines the agreement of the **Past Participle**.

Qui <u>s'è parlato</u> italiano	<i>Here we speak Italian, Here, Italian has been / was spoken</i>
<u>S'è venduta</u> una casa	<i>Someone sold a house, The house has been / was sold</i>
<u>Si sono viste</u> le Alpi	<i>You could see the Alps, The Alps have been / were seen</i>
<u>Ci si è conosciuti</u> meglio	<i>We got to know each other better</i>

Pay attention to what is underlined in the examples above. In the first example:



S'È (short for **SI È**), is the third person singular form of **ESSERE** in the Present Tense. **PARLATO**, ends in **-O**, to agree with our object ITALIANO, which is masculine.

Same again in the second example. **UNA CASA** is both singular and feminine, so we use **S'È** and **VENDUTA**, to match **CASA**.

In the third example the Object is feminine, plural. **LE ALPI**. We use **SI SONO** representing more than one, and **VISTE**, because **LE ALPI** is feminine plural.

The fourth example is a bit of a nightmare. If you recall our lesson on **Impersonal Statements**, things get even more complicated when the verb we use *impersonally* is a **Reflexive Verb**. Here the **CI** is a transformed version of **SI**, so it doesn't clash with the next **SI**. One **SI** is needed because the verb is Reflexive (**SI** being the third person singular **Reflexive Pronoun** - *oneself*); another **SI** is there to make the statement impersonal.

Drill

Do the drill that will help you put the **Reflexive Verb** in the past.

MI SONO + Past Participle [M / F]

TI SEI + Past Participle [M / F]

SI È + Past Participle [M / F]

CI SIAMO + Past Participle [M / F]

VI SIETE + Past Participle [M / F]

SI SONO + Past Participle [M / F]

Play with these verbs here:

ADDORMENTARSI	<i>TO FALL ASLEEP</i>
PENTIRSI	<i>TO REGRET, TO REPENT</i>
VERGOGNARSI	<i>TO FEEL ASHAMED</i>
SEDERSI	<i>TO SIT DOWN</i>
FIDANZARSI	<i>TO GET ENGAGED, TO START DATING SOMEONE</i>
ACCORGERSI	<i>TO REALIZE / BECOME AWARE</i>



ADDORMENTARSI

Mi sono addormentato/a	<i>I fell asleep</i>
Ti sei addormentato/a	<i>You fell asleep</i>
Si è addormentato/a	<i>He / She fell asleep</i>
Ci siamo addormentati/e	<i>We fell asleep</i>
Vi siete addormentati/e	<i>You all fell asleep</i>
Si sono addormentati/e	<i>They all fell asleep</i>

PENTIRSI

Mi sono pentito/a	<i>I repented</i>
Ti sei pentito/a	<i>You repented</i>
Si è pentito/a	<i>He / She repented</i>
Ci siamo pentiti/e	<i>We repented</i>
Vi siete pentiti/e	<i>You all repented</i>
Si sono pentiti/e	<i>They all repented</i>

VERGOGNARSI

Mi sono vergognato/a	<i>I felt ashamed</i>
Ti sei vergognato/a	<i>You felt ashamed</i>
Si è vergognato/a	<i>He / She felt ashamed</i>
Ci siamo vergognati/e	<i>We felt ashamed</i>
Vi siete vergognati/e	<i>You all felt ashamed</i>
Si sono vergognati/e	<i>They all felt ashamed</i>

SEDERSI

Mi sono seduto/a	<i>I sat</i>
Ti sei seduto/a	<i>You sat</i>
Si è seduto/a	<i>He / She sat</i>
Ci siamo seduti/e	<i>We sat</i>
Vi siete seduti/e	<i>You all sat</i>
Si sono seduti/e	<i>They all sat</i>

FIDANZARSI

Mi sono fidanzato/a	<i>I got engaged</i>
Ti sei fidanzato/a	<i>You got engaged</i>
Si è fidanzato/a	<i>He / She got engaged</i>
Ci siamo fidanzati/e	<i>We got engaged</i>
Vi siete fidanzati/e	<i>You all got engaged</i>
Si sono fidanzati/e	<i>They all got engaged</i>

ACCORGERSI

Mi sono accorto/a	<i>I realized</i>
Ti sei accorto/a	<i>You realized</i>
Si è accorto/a	<i>He / She realized</i>
Ci siamo accorti/e	<i>We realized</i>
Vi siete accorti/e	<i>You all realized</i>
Si sono accorti/e	<i>They all realized</i>

Your notes

