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, Reciprocì 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  myself
   TI  yourself
   SI  himself, herself, itself, oneself
   CI  ourselves
   VI  yourselves (you plural)
   SI  themselves

2) Verb ESSERE in the Present Tense
   SONO  subject is  iO
   SEI  subject is  TU
   È  subject is  LUI/LEI
   SIAMO  subject is  NOI
   SIETE  subject is  VOI
   SONO  subject is  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 lavata I washed myself (woman)
Ti sei lavata You washed yourself (woman)
S’è lavata She washed herself (woman)
Ci siamo lavate We washed ourselves (women)
Vi siete lavate You all washed yourselves (women)
Si sono lavate They washed themselves (women)

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

ARRABBIARSI

Mi sono arrabbiato/a I got angry
Ti sei arrabbiato/a You got angry
Si è arrabbiato/a He / She got angry
Ci siamo arrabbiati/e We got angry
Vi siete arrabbiati/e You all got angry
Si sono arrabbiati/e They all got angry
RIPOSARSI
Mi sono riposato/a  I rested
Ti sei riposato/a  You rested
Si è riposato/a  He / She rested
Ci siamo riposati/e  We rested
Vi siete riposati/e  You all rested
Si sono riposati/e  They all rested

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

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

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

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

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:
ADDORENTARSI TO FALL ASLEEP
PENTIRSI TO REGRET, TO REPENT
VERGOGNARSI TO FEEL ASHAMED
SEDERSI TO SIT DOWN
FIDANZARSI TO GET ENGAGED, TO START DATING SOMEONE
ACCORGERSI TO REALIZE / BECOME AWARE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ADDORMENTARSI</strong></th>
<th><strong>PENTIRSI</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mi sono addormentato/a</td>
<td>I fell asleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ti sei addormentato/a</td>
<td>You fell asleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Si è addormentato/a</td>
<td>He / She fell asleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ci siamo addormentati/e</td>
<td>We fell asleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vi siete addormentati/e</td>
<td>You all fell asleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Si sono addormentati/e</td>
<td>They all fell asleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VERGOGNARSI</strong></td>
<td><strong>SEDERSI</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mi sono vergognato/a</td>
<td>I felt ashamed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ti sei vergognato/a</td>
<td>You felt ashamed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Si è vergognato/a</td>
<td>He / She felt ashamed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ci siamo vergognati/e</td>
<td>We felt ashamed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vi siete vergognati/e</td>
<td>You all felt ashamed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Si sono vergognati/e</td>
<td>They all felt ashamed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FIDANZARSI</strong></td>
<td><strong>ACCORGERSI</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mi sono fidanzato/a</td>
<td>I got engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ti sei fidanzato/a</td>
<td>You got engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Si è fidanzato/a</td>
<td>He / She got engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ci siamo fidanzati/e</td>
<td>We got engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vi siete fidanzati/e</td>
<td>You all got engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Si sono fidanzati/e</td>
<td>They all got engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>****</td>
<td><strong>I realized</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>****</td>
<td><strong>Mi sono accorto/a</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>****</td>
<td><strong>Ti sei accorto/a</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>****</td>
<td><strong>He / She got engaged</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>****</td>
<td><strong>We got engaged</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>****</td>
<td><strong>You all got engaged</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>****</td>
<td><strong>They all got engaged</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Your notes