

Chapter 8: Souvenirs: 8-7 Structures
Book Title: Atelier
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8-7 Structures

8-7a Structure 8.1

Talking about how things used to be *L'imparfait*

The **imparfait** is used:

- to describe how things were in the past:

Quand j' étais petite, j' habitais en	<i>When I was little, I lived in town</i>
ville avec ma mère et mon père.	<i>with my mother and father.</i>

- to describe what people used to do or were doing:

Quand je rentrais de l'école, je	<i>When I returned from school, I</i>
faisais mes devoirs.	<i>would do (used to do) my</i>
	<i>homework.</i>

- to describe feelings and attitudes:

J' étais plutôt réservée.	<i>I was rather shy.</i>
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- to describe age, time, and weather in the past:

J' avais 10 ans.	<i>I was 10 years old.</i>
Il était midi.	<i>It was noon.</i>
Il faisait beau.	<i>The weather was nice.</i>

To form the **imparfait**, remove the **-ons** ending from the **nous** form of the present tense and

add the endings to the stem:

parler (parl-ons -)		finir (finiss-ons -)	
je parl ais	nous parl ions	je finiss ais	nous finiss ions
tu parl ais	vous parl iez	tu finiss ais	vous finiss iez
il/elle/on parl ait	ils/elles parl aient	il/elle/on finiss ait	ils/elles finiss aient

vendre (vend-ons -)	
je vend ais	nous vend ions
tu vend ais	vous vend iez
il/elle/on vend ait	ils/elles vend aient

The verb **être** has an irregular stem in the **imparfait**.

être	
j' étais	nous étions
tu étais	vous étiez
il/elle/on était	ils/elles étaient

To form the **imparfait** of verbs whose infinitives end in **-cer**, you must add a **cédille** to the **c** before an **a**.

commencer	
je commen ç ais	nous commen ç ions
tu commen ç ais	vous commen ç iez
il/elle/on commen ç ait	ils/elles commen ç aient

For infinitives ending in **-ger**, you add an **e** before an **a**.

manger

je mangeais	nous mangions
tu mangeais	vous mangiez
il/elle/on mangeait	ils/elles mangeaient

The verb **devoir** (*must, to have to*) changes its meaning in the **imparfait**. It means *was supposed to*.

Il devait arriver avant minuit.	<i>He was supposed to arrive before midnight.</i>
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