

# UNIT TWELVE

## The present perfect tense

### Use of the present perfect

1 The present perfect ('passato prossimo') is one of the two most used past tenses of the indicative in Italian (the other is the imperfect ('imperfetto')). The present perfect is often used like the English present perfect (e.g. '*I have seen it*', '*She has gone home*') to state that an action has happened in the past, but that its effects are still lasting in the present. However, in Northern Italy and in the language of the media, it is also equivalent to the English simple past (e.g. '*I saw it*', '*She went home*'), referring to actions which happened in a more distant past and have no immediate consequences in the present. Indeed, it more often corresponds to the English simple past than to the English present perfect. In other words, in Italian, the difference between present perfect ('passato prossimo') and simple past ('passato remoto') is not always marked, and it is always possible to use the former:

<b>Napoleone è morto il 5 maggio 1821.</b>	Napoleon died on 5 May 1821.
<b>L'estate scorsa siamo andati in vacanza sul lago di Garda.</b>	Last summer we went to Lake Garda for our/a holiday.
<b>Nina è nata in Russia.</b>	Nina was born in Russia.
<b>L'anno scorso, mi hanno regalato una mountain bike.</b>	Last year, they gave me a mountain bike.

2 The present perfect is a compound tense and is formed, as in English, with the present tense of the auxiliary verb followed by the past participle of the verb:

<b><i>Ho visto un bel film.</i></b>	I saw/ <i>have seen</i> a lovely film.
<b><i>Ha telefonato Marco.</i></b>	Marco phoned/ <i>has phoned</i> .
<b><i>Sono rimasto a casa.</i></b>	I stayed/ <i>have stayed</i> at home.
<b><i>Anna è uscita.</i></b>	Anna went out/ <i>has gone out</i> .
<b><i>Sono andati in piscina?</i></b>	Did they go/ <i>Have they gone</i> to the swimming pool?