

The Present Perfect Tense is made up of
haber + past participle.

Most participles end in -ado or -ido.

A few are irregular.

Why is it called the “past participle”?

Because historically, in Latin and in early Spanish, this form was used to describe **completed actions** — things that were “done,” “finished,” “broken,” “opened,” etc.

That meaning carried over into:

- **compound tenses** (he comido, había visto)
- **adjectives** (la puerta está abierta)

So the name “past participle” doesn’t mean the tense is past — it means the **form** expresses a completed action.

Is there a “present participle”?

Yes — but English and Spanish use the term differently.

In English:

The **present participle** is the **-ing** form:

- eating
- talking
- running

In Spanish:

The equivalent is the **gerundio**:

- comiendo
- hablando
- corriendo

Spanish grammar books almost never call this a “present participle.” They call it **el gerundio**.

So:

- **past participle** = *participio pasado* (hablado, comido, vivido)
- **present participle** = *gerundio* (hablando, comiendo, viviendo)

Why the Present Perfect uses the *past* participle:

Because the Present Perfect describes:

a completed action that is connected to the present

So you need the form that expresses **completion** → the past participle.

Examples:

- **he comido** — I have eaten (the eating is complete)
- **has visto** — you have seen (the seeing is complete)
- **hemos terminado** — we have finished (the finishing is complete)

The “present” part comes from **haber** (he, has, ha...). The “completed” part comes from the **past participle**.

Together they make the **Present Perfect. In summary:**

We use the *past participle* in the Present Perfect because it expresses a completed action — something you have already done.

Common Irregular Participles (with hypothetical regular forms)

Infinitive	If it were regular...	Actual irregular participle
abrir	<i>abrido</i>	abierto
cubrir	<i>cubrido</i>	cubierto
decir	<i>decido</i>	dicho
escribir	<i>escribido</i>	escrito
hacer	<i>hacido</i>	hecho
morir	<i>morido</i>	muerto
poner	<i>ponido</i>	puesto

Infinitive	If it were regular...	Actual irregular participle
resolver	<i>resolvido</i>	resuelto
romper	<i>rompido</i>	roto
ver	<i>vido</i>	visto
volver	<i>volvido</i>	vuelto
devolver	<i>devolvido</i>	devuelto

Semi-regular “-ído” participles

(These are technically regular but have an accent mark.)

Infinitive	Regular pattern	Actual participle
leer	leído	leído
creer	creído	creído
oír	oído	oído
traer	traído	traído