

Chapter Fifteen

Imperfect and Pluperfect Indicative Verbs: **past** /  & **past** / 

Imperfect Indicative Verbs: **past** /

Meaning

Components:

The imperfect indicative presents a verbal notion, using **process aspect** in **past time**. The **personal ending** specifies the person and number of the subject and specifies active or middle nuances. The semantic structure of an imperfect indicative verb is

past / **base** /  / **personal ending** <active or middle>

Translation:

The past time process that the imperfect communicates can be expressed in English in a number of ways. You'll have to decide which process nuance is most appropriate by considering the context of the passage. The following sentences illustrate the five ways you are most likely to translate imperfect verbs. The context rather than the form of the verb itself prompts us to choose one or the other of these translations.

1. **past/eat** /  / **he**. A single event viewed as process: "*He was eating* when the king arrived."
2. **past/eat** /  / **he**. A series of habitual or customary events viewed as process: "*He used to eat* at the same time every evening." Or, "*He would eat* at the same time every evening."
3. **past/attack** /  / **they**. Viewing the beginning of the event as a process adds vividness to the scene: "And then the enemy *were attacking*" = "And then the enemy *began to attack*."
4. **past/kill** /  / **he**. An attempted, but uncompleted, action viewed as a process: "The warrior was killing his enemy, but he collapsed and died before he could reach him." (In English we would almost always make our point clear by using a verb like "tried")
5. **past/find** /  / **they**. The imperfect tells you to linger over the scene—to imagine the scene as

a movie, and so add vividness: “That day Socrates’ friends *found* him ready to die.” In a sentence like this none of the other four translations seems particularly appropriate. English would use a simple past tense — “found.” Greek writers had the option of using the imperfect to signal their readers to dwell on the scene a moment and watch it play out as a process.

Past-time marker: augment

You have already learned what augments look like. You encountered this same marker in the aorist indicative. It works the same way here.



Process aspect marker

You have also already learned what process aspect markers look like. You encountered them in the present indicative.

Changes to the base

Adding the various process markers produces precisely the same changes you found in the present indicative. The present tense, with its **present** (or **process**) **stem** (**base** + **process marker**) and **ø time marker** shows a movie set in **present time**. The *imperfect*, with the same **present** (or **process**) **stem** and **augment**, shows the same movie set in **past time**.

As in the present tense, bases that end in α, ε, and ο experience contraction in Attic because that vowel collides with the theme vowel of the personal ending. You already know how vowels contract.

Personal Endings

The **personal endings** for the imperfect are identical to those used by the strong aorist. Be sure to notice that the imperfect always includes the **present stem** (i.e., **base** + **process marker**), while the strong aorist includes the **strong aorist stem** (i.e., **strong aorist base** + **ø event marker**).

Imperfect Active

	Singular	Plural
1 st -person	ἔβαλλον (ἐ/βαλ/γ/ο <u>ν</u>)	ἐβάλλομεν (ἐ/βαλ/γ/ο <u>μεν</u>)
2 nd -person	ἔβαλλες (ἐ/βαλ/γ/ε <u>ς</u>)	ἐβάλλετε (ἐ/βαλ/γ/ε <u>τε</u>)
3 rd -person	ἔβαλλε (ἐ/βαλ/γ/ε(<u>ν</u>))	ἔβαλλον (ἐ/βαλ/γ/ο <u>ν</u>)

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Imperfect Middle

	Singular	Plural
1 st -person	ἐβαλλόμεν (ἐ/βαλ/γ/όμην)	ἐβαλλόμεθα (ἐ/βαλ/γ/όμεθα)
2 nd -person	ἐβάλλεο (ἐ/βαλ/γ/εσσο) <i>Attic</i> : ἐβάλλον	ἐβάλλεσθε (ἐ/βαλ/γ/εσθε)
3 rd -person	ἐβάλλετο (ἐ/βαλ/γ/ετο)	ἐβάλλοντο (ἐ/βαλ/γ/οντο)

Pluperfect Indicative Verbs : past /

Meaning

Components:

The pluperfect indicative presents a verbal notion, using resultant-state aspect in past time—i.e, a past condition that resulted from a yet earlier event. The personal ending specifies the person and number of the subject and specifies either active or middle nuances. The semantic configuration of a pluperfect indicative verb is

past /  / base / personal ending <active or middle>

Translation:

Envision what the pluperfect reports: a past condition that resulted from an event that had been completed even further in the past. Then find a way to report that scene in English. Usually translations take one of two forms.

1. “The dam *had broken*.”
2. “The dam *was broken*.”

In Greek as in English pluperfects are quite rare, but if you pay attention to what their four morphological components tell you, recognizing and translating them should not be a problem.

Past-time marker: Augment

Of course.



Resultant-State aspect marker

The resultant-state markers for any given verb are the same in the pluperfect as they are in the perfect.

- All verbs take **reduplication** (or the **lengthening** or **ε** that substitute for reduplication in certain types of bases).
- Those (Weak Perfect) verbs that take a second resultant-state marker (**κ**) in the perfect active do the same in the pluperfect active.
- Those (Strong Perfect) verbs that do not take a second resultant-state marker (**κ**) in the perfect active don't in the pluperfect active either.

Perfect Stem

You already know that the **perfect stem** (base + resultant state markers) set in present time by the **ø time marker** makes an **X-ray** in **present** time. That very same **perfect stem**, set in past time by an augment, makes an **X-ray** in **past** time.

Personal Endings

The **personal endings** for the singular forms of the pluperfect active are identical to those used by the weak aorist active and perfect active. The plural forms use the same endings you learned for athematic aorists. Strangely, an **ε** is prefixed to all six endings. (I suspect that this **ε** was added as a redundant past time marker, i.e., to reassert the notion that this is a past time verb.) In Attic **εα** in the personal ending contracts in two different ways.

Weak Pluperfect Active

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>In Attic contracts to:</i>	<i>Plural</i>
1 st -person	ἐδεδώκεα (ἐ/δε/δ <u>ο</u> /κ/ <u>εα</u>) →	ἐδεδώκη or ἐδεδώκειν	ἐδεδώκεμεν (ἐ/δε/δ <u>ο</u> /κ/ <u>εμεν</u>)
2 nd -person	ἐδεδώκεας (ἐ/δε/δ <u>ο</u> /κ/ <u>εας</u>) →	ἐδεδώκης or ἐδεδώκεις	ἐδεδώκετε (ἐ/δε/δ <u>ο</u> /κ/ <u>ετε</u>)
3 rd -person	ἐδεδώκεε(ν) (ἐ/δε/δ <u>ο</u> /κ/ <u>εε</u>) →	ἐδεδώκει(ν)	ἐδεδώκεσαν (ἐ/δε/δ <u>ο</u> /κ/ <u>εσαν</u>)

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Strong Pluperfect Active

	<i>Singular</i> <i>In Attic contracts to:</i>	<i>Plural</i>
1 st -person	ἐλελοίπεα (ἐ/λε/λ ^ο ιπ/ε <u>α</u>) → ἐλελοίπη ἐλελοίπειν	ἐλελοίπεμεν (ἐ/λε/λ ^ο ιπ/ε <u>μεν</u>)
2 nd -person	ἐλελοίπεας (ἐ/λε/λ ^ο ιπ/ε <u>ας</u>) → ἐλελοίπης ἐλελοίπεις	ἐλελοίπετε (ἐ/λε/λ ^ο ιπ/ε <u>τε</u>)
3 rd -person	ἐλελοίπεε(ν) (ἐ/λε/λ ^ο ιπ/ε <u>ε</u>) → ἐλελοίπει(ν)	ἐλελοίπεσαν (ἐ/λε/λ ^ο ιπ/ε <u>σαν</u>)

The **personal endings** for the pluperfect middle are identical to those used by the other past time middles—aorist and imperfect. As in the perfect middle, so in the pluperfect middle, the endings are athematic.

Weak Pluperfect Middle

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
1 st -person	ἐδεδόμην (ἐ/δε/δο/μ <u>ην</u>)	ἐδεδόμεθα (ἐ/δε/δο/μ <u>εθα</u>)
2 nd -person	ἐδέδοσο (ἐ/δε/δο/σ <u>ο</u>)	ἐδέδοσθε (ἐ/δε/δο/σ <u>θε</u>)
3 rd -person	ἐδέδοτο (ἐ/δε/δο/τ <u>ο</u>)	ἐδέδοντο (ἐ/δε/δο/ν <u>το</u>)

Strong Perfect Middle

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
1 st -person	ελελείμην (ἐ/λε/λ ^ε ιπ/μ <u>ην</u>)	ελελείμμεθα (ἐ/λε/λ ^ε ιπ/μ <u>εθα</u>)
2 nd -person	ελέλειψο (ἐ/λε/λ ^ε ιπ/σ <u>ο</u>)	ελελειφθε (ἐ/λε/λ ^ε ιπ/σ <u>θε</u>)
3 rd -person	ελέλειπτο (ἐ/λε/λ ^ε ιπ/τ <u>ο</u>)	Usually none (ἐ/λε/λ ^ε ιπ/ν <u>το</u>)

Practically, what now?

Analyzing imperfects and pluperfects, of course. The imperfect is formed from the **present stem**; the pluperfect, from the **perfect stem**. In the space above each present, produce the imperfect. In the space above each perfect (active and middle), form the pluperfect (active and middle). I have highlighted a few stems to remind you of how easy it is to make the various past-time forms once you know the correct stem.

<i>Base</i>	Present	Perfect Active	Perfect Middle	Meaning
<i>παυ/</i>	παύω	πέπαυκα	πέπαυ(σ)μαι	stop
<i>λυ/</i>	λύω	λέλυκα	λέλυμαι	loosen
<i>κατα/λυ/</i>	καταλύω	καταλέλυκα	καταλέλυμαι	release
<i>κωλυ/</i>	κωλύω	κεκώλυκα	κεκώλυμαι	prevent
<i>κελευ/</i>	κελεύω	κεκέλευκα	κεκέλευμαι	bid, command
<i>παιδευ/</i>	παιδεύω	πεπαίδευκα	πεπαίδευμαι	educate
<i>έλκ(υ)/</i>	ἔλκω	εἴλκυκα	εἴλκυσμαι	drag
<i>πορευ/</i>	πορεύομαι		πεπόρευμαι	travel, fare
<i>ἀκοφ/</i>	ἀκούω	ἀκήκοα	ἤκουσμαι	hear
<i>ποιε/</i>	ποιέω	πεποίηκα	πεποίημαι	make, do
<i>αἰτε/</i>	αἰτέω	ἤτηκα	ἤτημαι	ask (a favor), demand
<i>αἶρε/</i>	αἶρέω	ἤρηκα	ἤρημαι	pick up, pick
<i>φιλε/</i>	φιλέω	πεφίληκα	πεφίλημαι	love
<i>ζητε/</i>	ζητέω	ἐζήτηκα	ἐζήτημαι	seek, look for
<i>ἀπορε/</i>	ἀπορέω	ἠπόρηκα	ἠπόρημαι	be at a loss

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<i>Base</i>	Present	Perfect Active	Perfect Middle	Meaning
<i>ἀνα/χωρε/</i>	ἀναχωρέω	ἀνακεχώρηκα	ἀνακεχώρημαι	withdraw, leave
<i>ἐξ/ήγε/</i>	ἐξηγέομαι		ἐξήγημαι	explain
<i>φοβε/</i>	φοβέω	πεφόβηκα	πεφόβημαι	terrify
<i>δια/νοε/</i>	διανοέομαι		διανενόημαι	contemplate
			τετέλημαι	
<i>τελε/</i>	τελέω	τετέληκα	τετέλησμαι	complete
<i>καλε/</i>	καλέω	κέκληκα	κέκλημαι	call
<i>σιωπα/</i>	σιωπάω	σεσίωπα	σεσιώπημαι	be silent
<i>τολμα/</i>	τολμάω	τετόλμηκα	τετόλμημαι	dare
<i>χρα/</i>	χράομαι		κέχρημαι	use
<i>κτα/</i>	κτάομαι		κέκτημαι	obtain
<i>μηχανα/</i>	μηχανάομαι		μεμηχάνημαι	contrive
<i>δυνα/</i>	δύναμαι		δεδύνημαι	be able
<i>γελα</i>	γελάω	γεγέλακα	γεγέλαμαι	laugh
<i>δρα/</i>	δράω	δέδρακα	δέδραμαι	do, act, perform

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<i>Base</i>	Present	Perfect Active	Perfect Middle	Meaning
<i>σεφα/</i>	έάω	εΐακα	εΐαμαι	allow
<i>έλα/</i>	ελαύνω	ελήλακα	ελήλα(σ)μαι	drive
<i>όρα/, ριδ/</i>	όράω	έώρακα	έώραμαι	see
<i>κρεμα/</i>	κρεμάννυμι	κεκρέμακα	κεκρέμαμαι	hang
<i>κ(ε)ρα/</i>	κεράννυμι	κεκέρακα	κέκραμαι	mix
<i>πρα/</i>	πίμπρημι	πέπρηκα	πέπρημαι	burn
<i>στα/</i>	ίστημι	ἔστηκα	ἔσταμαι	stand
<i>μνα/</i>	μιμνήσκω	μέμνηκα	μέμνημαι	remind
<i>δηλο/</i>	δηλόω	δεδήλωκα	δεδήλωμαι	reveal
<i>δο/</i>	δίδωμι	δέδωκα	δέδομαι	give
<i>τρο/</i>	τιτρώσκω	τέτρωκα	τέτρωμαι	wound
<i>γνο/</i>	γιγνώσκω	ἔγνωνκα	ἔγνωσμαι	know
<i>ΔΑ/ διδά(σ)κ/</i>	διδάσκω	δεδίδαχα	δεδίδαγμαι	teach
<i>πι/, πο/</i>	πίνω	πέπωκα	πέπομαι	drink
<i>φθα/</i>	φθάνω			anticipate, beat (+ participle)

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<i>Base</i>	Present	Perfect Active	Perfect Middle	Meaning
<i>διωκ/</i>	διώκω	δεδίωχα	δεδίωγμαι	pursue, prosecute
<i>λεγ/</i>	λέγω	εἶλοχα	λέλεγμαι, εἵλεγμαι	say, speak
<i>φεπ/</i> <i>φερ/</i> , <i>φρέ</i>		εἶρηκα	εἶρημαι	
<i>σεχ/</i>	ἔχω	ἔσχηκα	ἔσχημαι	hold, have
<i>ἄρχ/</i>	ἄρχω	ἤρχα	ἤργμαι	lead
<i>δεχ/</i>	δέχομαι		δέδεγμαι	receive
<i>ἄγ/</i>	ἄγω	ἤχα	ἤγμαι	lead, act
<i>ῥηγ/</i>	ῥήγνυμι	ῥρωγα	ῥρηγμαι	break
<i>δεικ/</i>	δείκνυμι	δεδείχα	δέδειγμαι	show
		ἀνέωχα		open
<i>ἀν(α)/οίγ/</i>	ἀνοίγνυμι	ἀνέωγα	ἀνέωγμαι	
<i>μιγ/</i>	μίγνυμι	μέμιχα	μέμιγμαι	mix
<i>πρηγ/</i>	πρήσσω	πέπρηχα	πέπρηγμαι	do, practice
<i>Attic: πραγ/</i>	πραττω	πέπραχα	πέπραγμαι	
<i>ἐκ/πληγ/</i>	ἐκπλήσσω	ἐκπέπληγα	ἐκπέπληγμαι	amaze

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<i>Base</i>	Present	Perfect Active	Perfect Middle	Meaning
<i>κηρυγ/</i>	κηρύσσω	κεκήρυχα	κεκήρυγμαι	proclaim
<i>πεμπ/</i>	πέμπω	πέπομφα	πέπεμμαι	send
		τέτροφα		
<i>τραπ/</i>	τρέπω	τέτραφα	τέτραμμαι	turn
<i>λιπ/</i>	λείπω	λέλοιπα	λέλειμμαι	leave
<i>γραφ/</i>	γράφω	γέγραφα	γέγραμμαι	draw, write
<i>θρεφ/</i>	τρέφω	τέτροφα	τρέτραμμαι	nurture
<i>βλαβ/</i>	βλάπτω	βέβλαφα	βέβλαμμαι	harm
<i>θαφ/</i>	θάπτω	τέταφα	τέθαμμαι	bury
<i>κοπ/</i>	κόπτω	κέκοφα	κέκομμαι	cut, hack
<i>κλεπ/</i>	κλέπτω	κέκλοφα	κέκλειμμαι	steal
<i>ρίπ/</i>	ρίπτω	ῥριφα	ῥριμμαι	throw
<i>σκεπ/</i>	σκέπτομαι		ῥσκεμμαι	look at, investigate
<i>λαβ/</i>	λαμβάνω	εἵληφα	εἵλημμαι	take
<i>λαθ/</i>	λανθάνω	λέληθα	λέλησμαι	escape notice

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<i>Base</i>	Present	Perfect Active	Perfect Middle	Meaning
<i>μαθ</i>	μανθάνω	μεμάθηκα		learn
<i>τυχ/</i>	τυγχάνω	τετύχηκα		happen (to x) (+ participle)
<i>λαχ/</i>	λαγχάνω	εἵληχα	εἵληγμαι	obtain by lot
<i>πιθ/</i>	πείθω	πέποιθα	πέπεισμαι	persuade
<i>έρχ/</i> <i>έλθ/</i>	ἔρχομαι	ἐλήλυθα		come
<i>νομιδ/</i>	νομίζω	νενόμικα	νενόμισμαι	consider, reckon
<i>κομιδ/</i>	κομίζω	κεκόμικα	κεκόμισμαι	convey
<i>ἐλπιδ/</i>	ἐλπίζω	ἤλπικα	ἤλπισμαι	hope
<i>θωμαδ/</i> <i>Attic: θανμαδ/</i>	θαμάζω θανμάζω	τεθώμακα τεθαύμακα	τεθώμασμαι τεθαύμασμαι	marvel
<i>κολαδ/</i>	κολάζω	κεκόλακα	κεκόλασμαι	punish
<i>ἄτιμαδ/</i>	ἄτιμάζω	ἡτίμακα	ἡτίμασμαι	dishonor
<i>φεργαδ/</i>	ἐργάζομαι		ἤργασμαι	work
<i>βιαδ/</i>	βιάζω	βεβίακα	βεβίασμαι	treat violently

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<i>Base</i>	Present	Perfect Active	Perfect Middle	Meaning
<i>ταμ/</i>	τέμνω	τέτμηκα	τέτμημαι	cut
<i>κριν/</i>	κρίνω	κέκρικα	κέκριμαι	judge
<i>σημαν/</i>	σημαίνω	σεσήμηνα	σεσήμασμαι	signify
<i>ποιμαν/</i>	ποιμαίνω	πεποίμηνα	πεποίμασμαι	herd, shepherd
<i>φαν/</i>	φαίνω	πέφηνα	πέφασμαι	shine (Mid.: appear)
<i>τν</i>	τείνω	τέτακα	τέταμαι	stretch
<i>ἀπο/κτν/</i>	ἀποκτείνω	ἀπέκτονα	ἀπέκταμαι	kill
<i>γεν/</i>	γίγνομαι	γέγονα	γεγένημαι	become, happen
<i>βουλ/</i>	βούλομαι		βεβούλημαι	want, decide
<i>σ텔/</i>	στέλλω	ἔσταλκα	ἔσταλμαι	send, dispatch
<i>ἄγγελ/</i>	ἀγγέλλω	ἤγγελκα	ἤγγελμαι	announce
<i>σφαλ/</i>	σφάλλω	ἔσφαλκα	ἔσφαλμαι	cause to slip
<i>βαλ/</i>	βάλλω	βέβληκα	βέβλημαι	throw
		ὀλώλεκα (v.t.)		
<i>ὀλ/</i>	ὀλλυμι	ὀλωλα (v.i.)		destroy

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<i>Base</i>	Present	Perfect Active	Perfect Middle	Meaning
<i>φθερ/</i>	φθείρω	ἔφθαρκα	ἔφθαρμαι	corrupt, ruin
<i>ἐγ(ε)ρ/</i>	ἐγείρω	ἐγήγερκα (v.t.) ἐγρήγορα (v.i.)	ἐγήγερμαι	raise
<i>εὕρ/</i>	εὕρισκω	ἤύρηκα	ἤύρημαι	find
<i>φερ/</i>	φέρω	ἐνήνοχα	ἐνήνειγμαι	carry

Am I ready to proceed?

- Do I know what the perfect indicative (active and middle) means—particularly with reference to time and aspect? Do I know the options for translating it?
- Do I recognize the **present time marker** in it?
- Do I know the **resultant-status aspect markers** for weak perfects and strong perfects?
- Do I know the changes to the *base* that occur when the resultant-status aspect markers are added?
- Do I understand how the imperfect is made from the same **process stem** (*base* + **process marker**) as the present and that the pluperfect is made from the same **resultant-state stem** (*base* + **resultant-state marker**) as the perfect?
- Have I memorized the active and middle **personal endings** for the perfect forms?
- Have I analyzed all the words in the morphology exercise? Have I asked for clarification of any items that I didn't fully understand?

When you can check off all the above, you're ready to proceed to the next chapter.