

## Lesson 37. The Perfect

So far you have learned the parts of the Active verb paradigm shown in bold below. These are the most frequently used forms. If you did not learn the remaining forms, you would still be able to read much of the New Testament and many statements in Attic Greek. Before going further, stop and make sure you can write these forms out easily. Then you will be ready to go on and fill out the remainder of the Active paradigm.

ACTIVE VOICE			
CONTINUOUS	FUTURE	AORIST	PERFECT
INDICATIVE			
			XXX
			XXX
SUBJUNCTIVE			
	--		+++
OPTATIVE			
XXX	XXX	XXX	+++
IMPERATIVE			
XXX	--	XXX	+++
INFINITIVE			
			XXX
PARTICIPLE			
			XXX

■■■■ already learned  
 -- doesn't exist  
 XXX to be learned  
 +++ made by combination of known forms

### THE PERFECT ACTIVE INDICATIVE: MEANING AND TRANSLATION

What do you not know how to express yet in Greek? "*I have X'd*" as opposed to "*I X'd*." "*I X'd*" is an aorist. "*I have X'd*" is a perfect.

Think of the difference between "*Did you go to Europe?*" and "*Have you been to Europe?*" The former question asks whether an event occurred in the past. The latter asks about you: "*Have you been to Europe (and therefore are you acquainted with European culture?)*" Or think of the difference between "*I drank*" and "*I have drunk*." "*I have drunk*" indicates not only that I drank but that the effect of the drinking is still felt. (For example, "*I have drunk and so I know what that drink tastes like*." Or "*I have drunk and so I am not thirsty*." Or "*I have drunk and so am drunk*.") When Hippolytus wants his horses to stop dragging him to death he addresses them with a perfect passive participle as "*having been nourished in my stalls*." The point is not that once in the past he nourished them but that they now feel the effects of that nourishment, for which they owe him kindness.

The perfect shows that an action took place in the past that has an effect in the present. It is really a kind of present tense. (*I have washed the horse* is almost the same as *I have a washed horse*.)

There is a past perfect, called the pluperfect, as well. Translate that as "*I had X'd*." Notice that not every use of *I had X'd* in English represents a Greek pluperfect. If you say, "*I had called the doctor a week before she fell ill*," that is an aorist as prior past because it is simply asserting that one past act took place before another. If you say, "*I had cleaned the house for my guests*," meaning "*I had cleaned it and therefore it was clean*," that would be a pluperfect. The pluperfect shows that an action took place in the past that continued to have an effect in the past. It is a kind of past tense. (*I had washed the horse* is almost the same as *I had a washed horse*.)