

The 14 verbs that take être instead of avoir (not always for all of them - see below!) as auxiliary verb in forming the perfect tense (passé composé) are as follows:

These verbs can be thought of as going in pairs:

<b>monter</b> (monté)	<b>descendre</b> (descendu)	
<b>aller</b> (allé)	<b>venir</b> (venu)	(also revenir, devenir)
<b>nâître</b> (né)	<b>mourir</b> (mort)	
<b>sortir</b> (sorti)	<b>entrer</b> (entré)	(also rentrer)
<b>tomber</b> (tombé)	<b>rester</b> (resté)	
<b>arriver</b> (arrivé)	<b>partir</b> (parti)	
<b>passer</b> (passé)	<b>retourner</b> (retourné)	

With être the participle agrees with the subject, as it does with reflexive verbs.

However, five of these verbs also have a sense in which they use **avoir** as the auxiliary verb.

This is when they take a direct object. These are:

monter, descendre	- when you have climbed up/down <i>something</i> , got on/off <i>something</i>
entrer, sortir	- when you have brought in/taken out <i>something</i>
retourner	- when you return <i>something</i>
passer	- when it is <i>time</i> you are passing, not something more tangible

In this case, like other verbs with **avoir**, the agreement is with a preceding direct object if present.

A particular case, which seems strange because in English it might be considered part of the verb, is going down/up the stairs:

Je suis descendu(e) - where the participle agrees with the subject as above

**but:**

J'ai descendu l'escalier - where descendu agrees with escalier (m), the direct object.

**note**, however;

Je suis descendu(e) par l'escalier, par l'ascenseur  
- this is *not* a direct object, so être is used

With **avoir** the agreement is with *any* preceding direct object pertains even when this is replaced with a pronoun:

J'ai écrit la lettre	Je l'ai écrite
J'ai écrit les lettres	Je les ai écrites
La lettre que j'ai écrite	Les lettres que j'ai écrites

Note that this can affect the pronunciation as well as the 'écriture'.