

# PRETERITO E IMPERFECTO

# The preterite tense

- ▣ The preterite allows you to refer to specific past actions performed. (1) at a fixed point in time, (2) a Specific number of times, or (3) during an enclosed amount of time.
- ▣ If the action is in the past and you can pinpoint it as to when or how many times it occurred, you will use the preterite tense.

# Fixed Point in time

- ▣ I **called** you at 3:00
- ▣ Te **llamé** a las 3:00
  
- ▣ He **bought** the car on Tuesday after noon.
- ▣ Se lo **compró** el martes en la tarde
  
- ▣ We **saw** the movie last night.
- ▣ **Vimos** la película anoche.

# Specific number of actions

- ▣ I **called** you five times
- ▣ Te **llamé** cinco veces.
  
- ▣ They **ate** ten sandwiches.
- ▣ **Comieron** diez sandwiches.
  
- ▣ She **read** the book twice.
- ▣ **Leyó** el libro dos veces

# Enclosed amount of times

- ▣ I **worked** for 8 hrs.
- ▣ **Trabajé** por 8 horas
  
- ▣ The movie **lasted** two hrs.
- ▣ La película **duró** dos horas.
  
- ▣ He **lived** there for two years
- ▣ **Vivió** allí por dos años

# The imperfect tense

- ▣ We use the **imperfect** tense when referring to actions that took place in the past either **repeatedly** or over an **extended period** of time. Unlike the preterite, which is used to specify and action either at a particular point in time or number of times. The **imperfect** indicates that an action took place during a non-specific time or was repeated an indefinite amount of times.

# The imperfect tense

- ▣ The element of time, though certainly in the past, is necessarily not specific. It is impossible to determine when the action began or ended, or the exact time or number of times it occurred.
1. I used to live in St. Luis
  2. John always ate cereal for breakfast
  3. Mary was a good conversationalist.

*Empecemos con el infinitivo. Quidemos la terminación.*

hablar

**habl**

comer

**com**

vivir

**viv**

*Añadamos la terminación nueva para el imperfecto...*

**hablaba**    **hablábamos**

**hablabas**    ---

**hablaba**    **hablaban**

**comía**    **comíamos**

**comías**    ---

**comía**    **comían**

**vivía**    **vivíamos**

**vivías**    ---

**vivía**    **vivían**



*¡Hay solamente*

***tres***

*verbos irregulares!*

**ser**

era éramos

eras ---

era eran

**ir**

iba íbamos

ibas ---

iba iban

**ver**

veía veíamos

veías ---

veía veían

# El Imperfecto

- ▣ Todos los días
- ▣ Siempre
- ▣ Frecuentemente
- ▣ Mientras
- ▣ De niño
- ▣ Regularmente
- ▣ A menudo
- ▣ A veces
- ▣ Cada día
- ▣ Todas las mañanas
- ▣ Every day
- ▣ Always
- ▣ Frequently
- ▣ While
- ▣ As a child
- ▣ Regularly
- ▣ Often
- ▣ Sometimes
- ▣ Eachday
- ▣ Every morning

# Rule #1 habitual actions in past

- ▣ Habitual or continuous action in the past : in English we often use the phrase “used to” as in “ I used to live in Texas” or “they used to eat at that restaurant”. In these cases there is no indication of when or how many times this action occurred or for how long.

# Rule # 2 Basic, simple description

- ▣ Very often an important element in sentences in the imperfect is simply a description of how things were. Whereas the preterite emphasis physical action. The reference is to what things were like, rather than what happened.
- ▣ I bought the car. **Preterite** (specific action)
- ▣ The car was red. **Imperfect** (description)
- ▣ Ana got married. **Preterite** (specific action)
- ▣ Ana was married. **Imperfect** (description)

# Rule # 3 “ing” progressive in the past

- ▣ We have learned present progressive =
- ▣ Estar (conjugated) + ado (ar) ido (er, ir)
- ▣ References to such action in the past “I was working” generally omit mention of a specific length of time therefore they are in the imperfect.

EX: I was playing and John was singing

Yo tocaba la guitarra y Juan cantaba.

## #4 Mental or emotional action or physical sensation.

- ▣ Feelings and mental actions usually are not bound by time or number of occurrences. These actions are not physical; rather they describe a state of being, and thus are continuous. In fact, several of the verbs listed below change greatly in the preterite.
- ▣ No creíamos el cuento
- ▣ Estabas cansado
- ▣ Romeo amaba a Julieta

# Verbs with emotion or feeling often used in the imperfect

- ▣ Amar = to love
- ▣ Conocer = to know
- ▣ Doler = to be painful
- ▣ Creer = believe
- ▣ Esperar = to wait/hope
- ▣ Estar = to be
- ▣ Gustar = to like
- ▣ Llevarse bien = to get along
- ▣ Molestar = to be bothersome
- ▣ Odiar = to hate
- ▣ Pensar = to think
- ▣ Poder = to be able to
- ▣ Querer = to want
- ▣ Saber = to know
- ▣ Sentir = to feel

# Words or phrases that imply frequency

- ▣ If an action is habitual or frequent you conjugate it in the imperfect



# El Imperfecto

- ▣ Todos los días
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- ▣ Regularmente
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- ▣ A veces
- ▣ Cada día
- ▣ Todas las mañanas
- ▣ Tantas veces
- ▣ Every day
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- ▣ While
- ▣ As a child
- ▣ Regularly
- ▣ Often
- ▣ Sometimes
- ▣ Eachday
- ▣ Every morning
- ▣ So many times

# Clock time and age in the past

- ▣ When referring to the time of day or one's age in the past always use the imperfect. There are only two verbs involved here. **Ser** (ser clock time) and **tener** for age. Note that references to time and age often are made with regard to other actions, and that these actions often (but not always) are in the preterite.

# Clock time and age examples

- ▣ Era la una cuando llegué.
- ▣ It was one when I arrived.
  
- ▣ Yo tenía diez años cuando conocí a Juan.
- ▣ I was ten when I met Juan.