

El Tiempo Imperfecto de los Verbos Regulares - 6

The Imperfect Tense of Regular Verbs

In Spanish, there are two verb tenses used to describe past action. **The preterite**, which you already have studied, and this new tense, **the imperfect**. Each of these tenses is used in different situations.

To form the imperfect tense for regular -ar, -er, & -ir verbs, the stem of the verb (infinitive minus -ar) is used with the following endings:

	<u>Hablar</u>	<u>Comer</u>	<u>Vivir</u>
Yo	hab<u>laba</u>	com<u>ía</u>	viv<u>ía</u>
Tú	hab<u>labas</u>	com<u>ías</u>	viv<u>ías</u>
Él,Ella,Ud.	hab<u>laba</u>	com<u>ía</u>	viv<u>ía</u>
Nosotros(as)	hab<u>lábamos</u>	com<u>íamos</u>	viv<u>íamos</u>
Ellos,Ellas,Uds.	hab<u>laban</u>	com<u>ían</u>	viv<u>ían</u>

- All -ar verbs in the imperfect are **regular** and use these -ar endings including verbs which are irregular in the present tense.

- The only three irregular verbs in the Imperfect are:

ir	iba, íbas, iba, íbamos, iban
ser	era, eras, era, éramos, eran
ver	veía, veías, veía, veíamos, veían

- The imperfect form of hay (haber) is **había**.

- To form the Imperfect Progressive Tense, the following construction is used:

Imperfect form of Estar	+	Present Participle (-ing)
estaba, estabas, estaba		add -ando for ar verbs
estábamos, estaban		add -iendo for er/ir verbs

¿Qué **estabas haciendo**?
Estaba estudiando.

What were you doing?
I was studying.

El Uso del Imperfecto y del Pretérito *The Use of the Imperfect vs. the Preterite*

The Imperfect is generally used to describe ongoing, habitual, or continuous action in the past. It may describe *what was happening*, *what was going on at a certain time*, or *what used to be*.

The Preterite is used to describe specific actions that occurred at a point in time or during a certain period. It describes action that was completed in the past. It usually describes *what happened* or *what occurred*.

Uses of the Imperfect & Preterite Tenses

Imperfect

1. Habitual and repeated actions. Repeated an unknown number of times.
2. Progressive or continuous actions repeated over an indefinite period of time.
3. The background and circumstances surrounding a main action including:
- time and weather

Preterite

1. Single, isolated actions repeated a specific number of times.
2. Actions that occurred during or at a specific period of time.
3. Main actions and events

- age, outward or physical appearance
 - feelings, beliefs, emotional states
 - any external circumstance or actions in progress
- With *hace*, the Imperfect or Preterite may be used depending on meaning.

Hace una hora cenábamos. *An hour ago* we were dining.
 Cenamos **hace una hora**. We had dinner **an hour ago**.

- In general, the meaning of the sentence can determine which tense to use.

A las seis **terminaba** mi trabajo.
At six I was finishing my work.

A las seis **terminé** mi trabajo.
At six I was finished my work.

El uso del pretérito y del imperfecto en la misma oración
The Use of the Preterite and Imperfect in the Same Sentence

Both of these past tenses can occur in the same sentence:

Specific Action

Vi un accidente.....
 Alguien **entró**.....

Cuando **llamaste**.....

Cuando **conoció** a
 Carmen.....

Ongoing or Progressive Action

mientras **esperaba** el autobús.
 cuando él profesor **daba** el
 examen.

estudiaba.

Felipe **era** estudiante

- The Specific Action will always be expressed in the Preterite and the Ongoing or Progressive Action will always be expressed in the Imperfect.

- Sentences which contain two specific or progressive actions will have verbs in only one tense.

Me fui cuando Elena **llegó**.

(Both Preterite)

Buceaba mientras **tomaba** el sol.

(Both Imperfect)