

## The imperfect tense: regular verbs

Another way to talk about the past is with the imperfect tense. Use the imperfect tense to talk about actions that happened repeatedly in the past.

Rafael **patinaba** y Mónica **corría**.

*Rafael used to skate and Monica used to run.*

Here are the regular forms of *-ar*, *-er*, and *-ir* verbs in the imperfect tense. Notice the accent mark on the *nosotros* form of *jugar*:

(yo)	<b>jugaba</b>	(nosotros) (nosotras)	<b>jugábamos</b>
(tú)	<b>jugabas</b>	(vosotros) (vosotras)	<b>jugabais</b>
Ud. (él) (ella)	<b>jugaba</b>	Uds. (ellos) (ellas)	<b>jugaban</b>

Note that *-er* and *-ir* verbs, such as *hacer* and *vivir*, have the same endings:

(yo)	<b>hacía</b> <b>vivía</b>	(nosotros) (nosotras)	<b>hacíamos</b> <b>vivíamos</b>
(tú)	<b>hacías</b> <b>vivías</b>	(vosotros) (vosotras)	<b>hacíais</b> <b>vivíais</b>
Ud. (él) (ella)	<b>hacía</b> <b>vivía</b>	Uds. (ellos) (ellas)	<b>hacían</b> <b>vivían</b>

- As you know, in Spanish you can often omit the subject of a verb because the subject is made clear in the verb ending:

**Vivo** en Chicago. (The subject, *yo*, is included in the verb ending.)

However, since the *yo* and *Ud. / él / ella* forms are the same in the imperfect for *-ar*, *-er*, and *-ir* verbs, speakers often use the subject pronouns to avoid confusion.

Patricia **tenía** un triciclo rojo pero **yo tenía** uno azul.

- Expressions such as *generalmente*, *por lo general*, *a menudo*, *muchas veces*, *de vez en cuando*, *todos los días*, and *nunca* can cue you to use the imperfect because they imply that something happened repeatedly in the past.

## The imperfect tense: irregular verbs

There are only three irregular verbs in the imperfect tense: *ir*, *ser*, and *ver*. Here are all the forms:

### **ir**

(yo) <b>iba</b>	(nosotros) (nosotras) <b>íbamos</b>
(tú) <b>ibas</b>	(vosotros) (vosotras) <b>ibais</b>
Ud. (él) <b>iba</b> (ella)	Uds. (ellos) <b>iban</b> (ellas)

### **ser**

(yo) <b>era</b>	(nosotros) (nosotras) <b>éramos</b>
(tú) <b>eras</b>	(vosotros) (vosotras) <b>erais</b>
Ud. (él) <b>era</b> (ella)	Uds. (ellos) <b>eran</b> (ellas)

- Notice the accent mark on the *nosotros* form for the verbs *ir* and *ser*.

### **ver**

(yo) <b>veía</b>	(nosotros) (nosotras) <b>veíamos</b>
(tú) <b>veías</b>	(vosotros) (vosotras) <b>veíais</b>
Ud. (él) <b>veía</b> (ella)	Uds. (ellos) <b>veían</b> (ellas)

- Notice the accent mark on each form of *ver*.

## Preterite

- ✓ Complete Actions
- ✓ How Long it Occurred
- ✓ Interrupted Actions
- ✓ Took Place at Certain Time
- ✓ Beginning of an Event or Emotion
- ✓ Describe a Sequence of events

## Imperfect

- ✓ Habitual, Repetitive Actions and Background
- ✓ Characteristics or Conditions
- ✓ It is progressive (ING's)
- ✓ What you Used to do
- ✓ Time or Age



# ¿el pretérito o el imperfecto?

Is there a defined time frame?

Sí

el pretérito

No

el imperfecto

No  
sé...

Are there clue words or phrases?

Sí

Do they include words like these?

anoche  
ayer  
anteayer  
el \_\_\_\_ pasado  
la \_\_\_\_ pasada  
de repente  
de pronto  
una vez  
por la primera vez

el pretérito

mientras  
generalmente  
por lo general  
de vez en cuando  
a veces  
muchas veces  
con frecuencia  
frecuentemente

el imperfecto

Does the context of the sentence indicate...

vivid action

or

completed event

or

beginning or end  
of an action

el pretérito

description

or

age or time

or

weather

or

habits, used to...

or

was/were --ing

el imperfecto