

Chapter 1 : Preterite vs. Imperfect by Mackenzie Richins on Prezi

Preterite vs Imperfect: Part IV. Notes: depending upon whether they are used in the preterite or the imperfect. This is not surprising, since the difference in.

The Spanish Preterite vs. Imperfect Tenses written by: Both express past actions or states but have different uses. They are not interchangeable. Also, when used together, they follow special rules. There are four verbs in Spanish that also have a different meaning in the preterite. Also, using the preterite and the imperfect together in the same narrative requires some finesse and judgement. To talk about a series of past actions: I got up, cleaned the garage, and went to the movies. To talk about the beginning or the end of a past occurrence: The movie began at 8: To talk about things viewed as completed: Compraste el coche hace dos meses. You bought the car two months ago. To describe an action that a person did habitually in the past: When we were in Washsington, we used to go to the movies every Sunday. To describe an action without reference to any beginning or end: Juan constantly had colds. To talk about an action that was going on in the past simultaneously with another: My brother was reading and my father was eating. To describe physical, emotional and mental states or conditions: I was so angry that I wanted to shout. To tell time Eran las siete y media de la tarde. To describe an action or state of being that took place in the past and lasted for a certain length of time prior to another past action. I had been watching television for four hours when my brother left. This is an example of how we can narrate the past in Spanish. We use the imperfect to say what was going on or what was happening in the background. When the action is interrupted by another action, we use the preterite. Note the switching of tenses in the following narrative: While I was studying, my brother entered. I looked at my watch. We went down the stairs, and I noticed that it was a little cold. Also, notice the slightly different meanings when the preterite forms of poder and querer are used in the negative. These verbs are displayed in the chart on the left. You can also download the sheet.

Chapter 2 : When to Use the Preterite vs. the Imperfect: Spanish Grammar

Note: Although this difference may appear simple, this is actually a complex topic, and you will learn the finer points in later lessons. Let's add two more flashcards, one for regular -ar preterite, and one for regular -ar imperfect.

We have only one past tense conjugation and it tells us simply one thing – the action happened in the past. Clearly the fishing took place in the past. To get across to the reader or listener important information such as when or how often this event occurred we have to add some extra information: I went fishing yesterday. I went fishing every morning. In the first sentence we know that the fishing happened once. In the second we know it happened repeatedly. Most of the decision to use either the preterite or the imperfect boils down to the difference in the two example sentences above. In Spanish, information as to whether the event happened once or went on for a while is "built in" to the conjugation you choose. When to Use the Imperfect Tense Note: For this lesson imperfect conjugations will be indicated like this: On Saturdays I played with my neighbor. *Mi madre siempre me preparaba desayuno.* My mother would always prepare breakfast for me. Words such as "always," "frequently," "generally," "never," "often," "usually," "used to," and "would" clue us into the fact that we should use the imperfect. Background Information We use the imperfect to describe the setting or provide background information such as what people, places, or conditions were like at some unspecified time in the past: *La ciudad era vieja y sucia.* The city was old and dirty. The little mermaid was named Ariel and she had six sisters. Isabel was eight years old. It was one in the morning. Ongoing Actions The Imperfect Progressive Additionally, we use the imperfect to describe actions that were ongoing or in progress at some point in the past. This is roughly equivalent to using the imperfect progressive. In these sentences, when the action began or ended is unimportant, it just happened to be occurring at that moment: Rosa was doing her homework at 9: I was drawing Monday morning. Translating the Imperfect Because in English we only have one past tense conjugation, we often have to resort to adding words to get our exact meaning across. All three English sentences could be translated the same way in Spanish, and any one of the English sentences might be the best translation of this one Spanish sentence, depending on context: I walked on Sundays. I would walk on Sundays. I used to walk on Sundays. For this lesson preterite conjugations will be indicated like this: To talk about single, completed actions that took place at specific points in time: On Saturday I played with my neighbor. My mother prepared breakfast for me this morning. Since the actions referred to in these examples are one-time events, we choose the preterite. And lastly, mother prepared breakfast once, this morning. Time cues such as length of time, or a specific year, season, month, day, or time of day indicate that we should be using the preterite. What if you have both a repeated action and a definite time frame? Use the preterite when a completed action is repeated a specific number of times. *Fui al aeropuerto tres veces ayer.* I went to the airport three times yesterday. *Ayer hice mi tarea.* Yesterday I did my homework. I also watched two movies. *La plaza estaba decorada para la fiesta.* Now we are explicitly stating when the action started, lasted, or ended, and therefore indicating that the time frame is important. Because of this we are subtly indicating that a change has occurred: *La plaza estuvo decorada por un mes.* Esmeralda tuvo que regresar a casa el martes. The weather was cold two days ago. Due to their meanings, some verbs tend to be conjugated in the imperfect tense and some verbs are more naturally preterite. Because the verb *soler* means "to usually" or "to be in the habit of" it cannot be used in the preterite. Due to the differences in emphasis between a preterite and imperfect conjugation, some verbs will have significant differences in meaning when translated. Hopefully by now these variations will make some sense to you. Notice how the preterite tends to signal a change:

Chapter 3 : Preterite vs Imperfect: Part IV - calendrieldelascience.com

Preterite vs. Imperfect in Spanish Many students have trouble knowing when to use the preterite tense or the imperfect tense, as they both refer to actions in the past. There are several general rules you can follow to know when to use one tense or another.

Chapter 4 : Verbs That Change Meaning in the Preterite

A basic and easy-to-understand overview of Spanish verbs and tenses, with a particular focus on the difference between the preterite tense and imperfect tense in Spanish.

Chapter 5 : Spanish Imperfect Tense | SpanishDict

Spanish 3 Notes on Preterite vs. Imperfect 1. Uses of the Imperfect & Preterite We use the imperfect to describe habitual or repeated events in the past. We use the preterite to describe a particular or specific event.

Chapter 6 : Preterit vs. imperfect in Spanish

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Chapter 7 : Preterite vs Imperfect: Part I - calendrierdelascience.com

1 Preterite vs Imperfect: Two Aspects of the Past Tense Both the preterite and the imperfect are used to narrate in the past. The difference.

Chapter 8 : Preterite vs Imperfect in Spanish | Digestible Notes

Spanish has two simple past tenses: the preterite and imperfect. Both Spanish past tenses express past actions or states, but the preterite and the imperfect tenses have different uses. Also, four Spanish verbs (conocer, poder, querer, and saber) have different meanings in the preterite or when used in the negative.

Chapter 9 : Preterite-Imperfect Formulas

Trying to decide when to use the Preterite and when to use the Imperfect is one of the challenges of learning these two tenses. Review the uses of the Imperfect and the Preterite, and make a chart for yourself listing the differences.