

El uso del tiempo Imperfecto

The Use of the Imperfect Tense

The Imperfect is a **past** tense. It is used in certain situations.....

1. Habitual, Repeated, or Customary actions.
Actions that were repeated an unknown number of times. Actions that occurred over a long period of time.

- Los viernes, **iba** al cine.
- *On Fridays, I went to the movies.*
- Siempre **comiamos** en casa de mi abuela.
- *We always ate at my grandmother's house.*
- De niño, yo **jugaba** al beisbol.
- *As a child, I played baseball.*

Common words and expressions associated with the Imperfect Tense:

- los + day of the week (*every....*)
- generalmente (*generally, usually*)
- todos los días (*everyday*)
- siempre (*always*)
- muchas veces (*many times*)

2. Telling Time.

- ¿Qué hora **era**?
- *What time **was it**?*

When answering the question, the same rules as in the present tense apply:

1:00 hour **Era la.....**una y diez.

It was *ten after one.*

2:00 -12:00 hour **Eran las.....**siete menos cuarto.

It was *quarter of seven.*

3. Expressing Age

- ¿Cuántos años **tenías**?
- *How old were you?*
- **Tenía** trece años.
- *I was thirteen years old.*

4. An action that went on (and on), continued, or was in progress. An action with no clear beginning and/or end. This may include two actions at the same time.....

Examples.....

- **Escribíamos** mientras el profesor **daba** las notas.
- **We were writing** while the teacher **was giving** the notes.
- Mamá **preparaba** la comida a esa hora.
- Mom **was preparing** the meal at that hour.

5. An action that was going on when another occurred. The background activity.

Nosotros **mirábamos** la tele cuando tú **llamaste**.

↑
Imperfect Tense

↑
Preterite Tense

We were watching t.v. when you called.

The interrupting action is expressed in the preterite. It is possible to have different past tenses within the same sentence.

6. Statements that only describe or that **do not** express an “easy to visualize” action.

- El hombre **tenía** pelo rubio.
- *The man **had** blond hair.*
- Él **se parecía** a un payaso.
- *He **looked like** a clown.*
- La chica **llevaba** gafas
- *The girl **wore** glasses.*

7. To express the idea of “used to” do.....

- No sé qué pasó. Ella **comía** brócoli.
- *I don't know what happened. She **used to eat** broccoli.*
- De niño yo **tenía** mucho pelo, ahora no.
- *As a child, I **used to have** a lot of hair, now I don't.*