

### Preterite vs Imperfect: Part III

Some verbs actually **change meaning**, depending upon whether they are used in the **preterite** or the **imperfect**.

#### Conocer

Conocí a Juan hace cinco años. I **met** Juan five years ago.

**Preterite** (completed action)

En aquella época **conocíamos** muy bien la ciudad.

At that time we knew the city very well.

**Imperfect** (no definite beginning or end)

#### Querer

María **quiso** comprar la casa. Maria **tried to buy** the house.

**Preterite** (completed action)

Juan **quería** comprar la casa. Juan **wanted to buy** the house.

**Imperfect** (no definite beginning or end)

#### No Querer

María **no quiso** comprar la casa. Maria **refused to buy** the house. **Preterite** (completed action)

Juan **no quería** comprar la casa. Juan **did not want to**

buy the house. **Imperfect** (no definite beginning or end)

#### Saber

María lo **supo** ayer. Maria **found out** yesterday.

**Preterite** (completed action)

Juan **sabía** que María venía. Juan **knew** that Maria was

coming. **Imperfect** (no definite beginning or end)

#### Poder

María **pudo** levantar la mesa. Maria **succeeded** in lifting the table. **Preterite** (completed action)

Juan **podía** participar en la manifestación.

Juan **was able to** participate in the demonstration.

**Imperfect** (no definite beginning or end)

#### Tener

María **tuvo** una carta de su mamá. Maria **received** a letter from her mom. **Preterite** (completed action)

Juan **tenía** un coche nuevo. Juan **used to have** a new

car. **Imperfect** (no definite beginning or end)

### Preterite vs Imperfect: Part III

A. Choose between the preterite or the imperfect.

1. We wanted to buy the car. \_\_\_\_\_ comprar el auto.

2. The man refused to speak. El hombre \_\_\_\_\_ hablar.

3. They found out the news yesterday. \_\_\_\_\_ las noticias ayer.

4. The boy knew she was coming. El chico \_\_\_\_\_ que ella venía.

5. We succeeded in lifting the piano. \_\_\_\_\_ levantar el piano.

6. I met Juan five years ago. Hace cinco años que \_\_\_\_\_ a Juan.

7. I received a letter from my sister. \_\_\_\_\_ una carta de mi hermana.

8. Carmen used to have a house in Acapulco.

Carmen \_\_\_\_\_ una casa en Acapulco.

9. Arturo tried to leave. Arturo \_\_\_\_\_ salir.

10. Maria tried to eat. María \_\_\_\_\_ comer.

11. The girls were able to go to the party. Las chicas \_\_\_\_\_ ir a la fiesta.

12. The brothers received a message from their father.

Los hermanos \_\_\_\_\_ un mensaje de su padre.

13. The drunk refused to leave. El borracho \_\_\_\_\_ salir.

14. I knew him well. Le \_\_\_\_\_ bien.

15. Jorge met a charming young lady. Jorge \_\_\_\_\_ a una simpática señorita.

16. At that time we knew the city very well. En aquella época \_\_\_\_\_ muy bien la ciudad.

17. Alberto succeeded in reading the whole book.

Alberto \_\_\_\_\_ leer el libro entero.

18. I wasn't able to remember his name. No \_\_\_\_\_ recordar su nombre.

19. Last night Juan found out the truth. Anoche Juan \_\_\_\_\_ la verdad.

20. The young ladies did not want to leave. Las señoritas \_\_\_\_\_ salir.

The **preterite** is used in the following situations:

For actions that can be viewed as **single events**

For actions that were **repeated a specific number of times**

For actions that occurred during a **specific period of time**

For actions that were part of a **chain of events**

To state the **beginning** or the **end of an action**

The **imperfect** is used in the following situations:

For actions that were **repeated habitually**

For actions that "**set the stage**" for another past action

For telling **time**

For stating one's **age**

For **mental states** (usually)

For **physical sensations** (usually)

To describe the **characteristics of people, things or conditions**

**Preterite vs Imperfect: Review**

A. Choose the correct **preterite** tense conjugation.

1. Juan y yo (ser) somos fuimos éramos

2. tú (dar) das dabas diste

B. Choose the correct **imperfect** tense conjugation.

3. las gatas (ser) fueron eran son

4. las gatas (ir) iban van fueron

C. Choose the correct **preterite** tense conjugation.

5. Juan (dormir) durmió dormía duerme

6. Juan y María (pedir) pidieron pedían

**D.** Try substituting **was/were ...ing, used to ..., would** (meaning used to) ...

7. Every day I visited my aunt. visité visitaba  
8. Juan ran most mornings. corrió corría

**E.** The following sentences all describe how things were, or what things were like. Use the **imperfect** or **preterite**?

9. The house was white. fue era  
10. The store was full of candy. estuvo estaba

**F.** Fill in the missing letters in order to form the correct preterite conjugation.

11. yo pa\_\_\_\_\_é pagar  
12. yo bus\_\_\_\_\_é Buscar

**G.** Choose the correct **preterite** tense conjugation.

13. Juan y María (leer) leen leyeron leían  
14. el hombre (influir) influye influía influyó

**H.** Choose the correct form of the verb. You must decide whether to use **preterite** or **imperfect**, and you must conjugate the verb correctly.

15. The girls **spoke** to the professor. Las chicas \_\_\_\_\_ con el profesor.  
16. I studied with Juan for **three hours**. \_\_\_\_\_ con Juan por tres horas.  
17. She **used to** call me every night. Ella me \_\_\_\_\_ cada noche.  
18. We **used to** dance the tango every night. \_\_\_\_\_ el tango cada noche.

**I.** Using the phrase that is in bold as a hint, choose between the **preterite** or the **imperfect**.

19. Los muchachos \_\_\_\_\_ a las montañas **cada** invierno.  
20. Juan \_\_\_\_\_ algunos objetos **ayer**.

**J.** Fill in the missing stem in order to form the correct preterite conjugation.

21. yo \_\_\_\_\_é Pagar  
22. tú \_\_\_\_\_iste Estar  
23. Juan \_\_\_\_\_o Tener  
24. nosotros \_\_\_\_\_imos Correr  
25. vosotros \_\_\_\_\_isteis Haber  
26. las mujeres \_\_\_\_\_ieron Poder  
27. el chico \_\_\_\_\_o Poner  
28. las chicas \_\_\_\_\_ieron Saber  
29. yo \_\_\_\_\_e Hacer  
30. nosotros \_\_\_\_\_imos Querer  
31. tú \_\_\_\_\_iste Venir

**K.** Choose the correct **preterite** tense conjugation.

32. Juan (traer) trae traía trajo  
33. el chofer (conducir) conducía conduce condujo  
34. Carmen (decir) dijimos decíamos dijo  
35. ustedes (ver) ven vieron veían  
36. tú (traducir) traducías traduces tradujiste

**L.** Choose between the **preterite** or the **imperfect**.

37. The man **refused** to speak. El hombre \_\_\_\_\_ hablar.  
38. They **found out** the news yesterday. \_\_\_\_\_ las noticias ayer.  
39. We **succeeded** in lifting the piano. \_\_\_\_\_ levantar el piano.  
40. Arturo **tried to** leave. Arturo \_\_\_\_\_ salir.