



What's the Imperfect?

- Past tense that refers to past **ongoing** and **habitual** actions.
- The imperfect is **descriptive**. It narrates.
 - Creates the **background** for a past event.

Verónica y Marco **vivían** en la siguiente cuadra.
Verónica y Marco used to live in the next block.

Cuando vi a Brad Pitt, yo **estaba** esperando mi vuelo y él **iba** pasando.
When I saw Brad Pitt, I was waiting for my flight, and he was walking by.

Take Note: Picture of the past – details about the setting, actions, and feelings.

How to Form the Imperfect Tense

When conjugating to the Imperfect tense, there are a few important notes to keep in mind to help simplify the conjugation process:

1. ER & IR **share** the exact same endings.
2. 1st & 3rd person singular have the **same endings**.

Person	Estar	Ponerse	Pedir
Yo	Estaba	Me ponía	Pedía
Tú	Estabas	Te ponías	Pedías
Él / Ella / Ud	Estaba	Se ponía	Pedía
Nosotros	Estábamos	Nos poníamos	Pedíamos
Vosotros	Estabais	Os poníais	Pedíais
Ellos / Ellas / Uds	Estaban	Se ponían	Pedían



Imperfect Irregular Verbs

There are only three irregular verbs in the imperfect tense:

Person	SER	IR	VER
Yo	Era	Iba	Veía
Tú	Eras	Ibas	Veías
Él / Ella / Usted	Era	Iba	Veía
Nosotros	Éramos	Íbamos	Veíamos
Vosotros	Erais	Ibais	Veíais
Ellos / Ellas / Ustedes	Eran	Iban	Veían

Take Note: The rule where the 1st & 3rd person singular conjugations have the same endings also applies to irregular verbs.

Uses of the Imperfect Tense

1. Describe people, places & things

(Physical traits, feelings, telling time, location and age)

Eran las dos cuando me fui.

It was two when I left.

La escuela **estaba** al lado del parque.

The school was next to the park.

Imperfect Tense Lesson Notes



Cuando **era** niña, Lucía tenía los ojos verdes.
When she was a child, Lucia had green eyes.

Julio **tenía** veinte años cuando se casó.
Julio was twenty years old when he got married.

2. Refer to past ongoing & recurring actions (Habits / Undefined beginning or ending)

En ese trabajo, **entrábamos** a las 8.
In that job, we started at 8.

Laura **corría** todos los días.
Laura used to run everyday.

¿A qué hora **te despertabas**?
What time did you use to wake up?

Cuando me fui, Juan **seguía** dormido.
When I left, Juan was still asleep.

Take Note: These are actions with no clear beginning or ending.

Imperfect & Present: Two Sides of the Same Coin

The present indicative and the imperfect talk about facts, habits, descriptions.

Now

Nunca **como** verduras.
I never eat veggies.

Laura **corre** todos los días.
Laura runs every day.

Then

Nunca **comía** verduras.
I never used to eat veggies.

Laura **corría** todos los días.
Laura would run every day.

Take Note: The imperfect can be translated as 'used to' or 'would' + [inf. verb].



Key Time Markers

Example Paragraph with Time Markers & Imperfect Tense

En 1997, cuando yo era niña, los patines del diablo **estaban** de moda. Mi hermano y yo **siempre queríamos** usar nuestro patín para ir a la tienda. **A veces**, lo **usábamos** para ir a la escuela. **En ese tiempo**, **era** más seguro pasear en la calle, pero mi mamá **nunca** nos **dejaba** salir solos. **Cada*** tarde, **cuando llegábamos** de la escuela **hacíamos** nuestra tarea y después **íbamos** al parque con mi mamá porque mi papá **trabajaba todos los días***.

Take Note: Complete with time-related nouns.

Key Time Markers

1. **A veces** - Sometimes
2. **Siempre** - Always
3. **Todos los días*** - Every day
4. **Cada..** - Every
5. **Cuando** - When
6. **En 1997** - In 1997
7. **Nunca** - Never
8. **En ese tiempo** - Back



Common Daily Life Situations Where You Need the Imperfect

Expression	Example
1. Talk about past habits and routines .	Todos los domingos íbamos a visitar a mi abuela. <i>We used to visit grandma every Sunday.</i>
2. Expressing the location of things and places.	¿Viste mis llaves? Estaban en la mesa. <i>Did you see my keys? They were on the table.</i>
3. Expressing past intentions .	Erik y yo íbamos a ir a tu fiesta, pero se descompuso el carro. Sí queríamos ir. <i>Erik and I were going to go to your party, but the car broke down. We really wanted to go.</i>
4. Telling someone's age .	En 1990, Alex tenía dos años. <i>In 1990, Alex was two years old.</i>
5. Telling the time of an habitual action.	¿A qué hora eran tus clases? <i>What time were your classes?</i>
6. Describing how someone or something used to be . (Physical, mental, and emotionally.)	Ayer vi a Ceci y no se veía bien. Tenía ojeras y parecía triste. <i>I saw Ceci yesterday and she didn't look well. She had eye bags and seemed sad.</i>



Challenge

Write at least one sentence:

1. Describing a routine from your childhood.

2. Telling what you and your friends liked to do.

3. Describing a childhood friend.

4. Talking about a pet you used to have.

5. Telling me about your favorite tv show or book.

Resources

- [Spanish Imperfect Tense: Describe the Past & Tell Stories in Spanish](#)
- [Spanish Imperfect Tense: Uses, Examples & Conjugations](#)
- [Spanish Past Tenses 101: Preterite vs Imperfect](#)