



When to Use the Preterite

The preterite tense is used to talk about **completed actions in the past**. This can refer to single action or a sequence of completed events.

¿Cómo **estuvo** tu fin de semana?
How was your weekend?

Escuché que **hablaste** con Juan.
I heard that you spoke to Juan.

Estuvo bien. **Fui** al cine, **lavé** ropa, **limpié** la casa y **preparé** de cenar.
It was good. I went to the movies, I did some laundry, cleaned the house, and made dinner.

The preterite has a **precise nature**. We can see this nature in:

- Unique events.
- Clearly defined number of repetitions.
- Clear beginning or ending (explicit or implicit).

Ana **ordenó** una pizza y **vio** una película.
Ana ordered a pizza and watched a movie.

La fiesta **fue** en mi casa.
The party was at my house.

Ayer **vi** a Sonia y me **dijo** que **se casó** hace dos años.
I saw Sonia yesterday and she told me she got married two years ago.

Take Note: Use time markers and defined words to express specificity.



How to Form the Preterite

Person	LEVANT <u>AR</u> SE	CORR <u>ER</u>	VIV <u>IR</u>
Yo	Me levant <u>é</u>	Corr <u>í</u>	Viv <u>í</u>
Tú	Te levant <u>aste</u>	Corr <u>iste</u>	Viv <u>iste</u>
Él/Ella/Usted	Se levant <u>ó</u>	Corr <u>ió</u>	Viv <u>ió</u>
Nosotros	Nos levant <u>amos</u>	Corr <u>imos</u>	Viv <u>imos</u>
Vosotros	Os levant <u>asteis</u>	Corr <u>isteis</u>	Viv <u>isteis</u>
Ellos/Ellas/Uds	Se levant <u>aron</u>	Corr <u>ieron</u>	Viv <u>ieron</u>

Take Note: ER & IR share the exact same endings.

Take Note: Nosotros verb conjugation endings share similarities in the present and preterite tenses. -AR present = -AR preterite | -IR present = -ER/-IR preterite.



Stem-Changing verbs

Most spelling changes you'll find in Spanish stem-changing verbs will be vocalic. This simply means that one or two vowels will replace a vowel from the stem.

3rd Person = Vocalic

These changes are only applied to the third person singular and plural (él and ellos).

Person	O to U	E to I
Yo	Dormí	Pedí
Tú	Dormiste	Pediste
Él/Ella/Usted	Durmió	Pidió
Nosotros	Dormimos	Pedimos
Vosotros	Dormisteis	Pedisteis
Ellos/Ellas/Uds	Durmieron	Pidieron

Verbs that undergo this change include:

1. Servir
2. Repetir
3. Vestirse
4. Mentir
5. Divertir
6. Sentir
7. Preferir
8. Convertir

Yo siempre **pido** ese jugo. Ale lo **pidió** ayer.
I always order that juice. Ale ordered yesterday.

José y Juan siempre se **visten** muy formal, pero hoy se **vistieron** más casual.
José and Juan always dress very formally, but today they dressed casually.

Take Note: E to I verbs in the present maintain the change in the preterite.

Preterite Tense Lesson Notes



Ellie nunca se **divierte** en las fiestas, pero ayer se **divirtió** mucho.
Ellie never has fun at parties, but yesterday she had a lot of fun.

Tú **prefieres** ir al cine, pero los demás **prefirieron** ir a cenar.
You prefer to go to the movies. The others preferred to go out for dinner.

3rd Person = Vocalic

Person	Í to Y
Yo	Leí
Tú	Leíste
Él/Ella/Usted	Leyó
Nosotros	Leímos
Vosotros	Leísteis
Ellos/Ellas/Uds	Leyeron

Verbs that undergo the **í to y** change in the preterite tense include:

1. Caer
2. Huir
3. Oír

Preterite Tense Lesson Notes



1st Person = Consonant changes

The three consonant stem changes that occur in the preterite tense and affect the pronoun 'yo' are:

1. -car > **qué**
2. -gar > **gué**
3. -zar > **cé**

The first two changes (-car > **qué**, -gar > **gué**) are made to maintain consistent pronunciation of the verb, while the third change (-zar > **cé**) satisfies special spelling rules in Spanish.

Person	-car > qué	-gar > gué	-zar > cé
Yo	Tocé > Toqué	Llegé > Llegué	Abrazé > Abracé
Tú	Tocaste	Llegaste	Abrazaste
Él/Ella/Usted	Tocó	Llegó	Abrazó
Nosotros	Tocamos	Llegamos	Abrazamos
Vosotros	Tocasteis	Llegasteis	Abrazasteis
Ellos/Ellas/Uds	Tocaron	Llegaron	Abrazaron

Below is a list of common verbs that have these first-person consonant stem changes.

-car > qué:

1. Buscar
2. Explicar
3. Sacar

-gar > gué:

1. Investigar
2. Jugar
3. Pagar

-zar > cé:

1. Utilizar
2. Reemplazar



Irregular verbs

- They **affect both** the verb stem and endings.
- Irregular verbs in the preterite **have a set of endings**.
- Most irregular verbs can be **grouped by patterns**.

Person	Ending	Person	Ending
Yo	-e*	Nosotros	-imos
Tú	-iste	Vosotros	-isteis
Él/Ella/Usted	-o*	Ellos/Ellas/Uds	-ieron

Take Note: Irregular endings are a combination of -ER/-IR regular endings and unaccented -AR endings.

The 'UV' Group

1. Estar > **Estuv**
2. Tener > **Tuv**
3. Andar > **Anduv**
4. Mantener > **Mantuv**

Ayer **tuve** mucho trabajo, entonces, **estuve** ocupada todo el día. ¿Tú qué **anduviste** haciendo?

Take Note: Irregularities also apply to **derived** verbs. For example, **mantener** contains the verb **tener**. So, when we make stem changes or have irregular conjugations for tener (e.g. **tuve**), derived verbs like mantener apply the same changes (e.g. **mantuve**).

Preterite Tense Lesson Notes



The 'U' Group

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Saber > Sup | 3. Caber > Cup | 5. Haber > Hub |
| 2. Poder > Pud | 4. Poner > Pus | |

¿Alguien **supo** si **hubo** tarea?
Did anyone find out if there was homework?

Puse la botella en la mesa porque no la **pude** abrir.
I put the bottle on the table because I couldn't open it.

The 'J' Group

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Traer > Traj | 3. Traducir > Traduj | 5. Decir* > Dij |
| 2. Distraer > Distraj | 4. Conducir > Conduj | |

Sonia **trajo** el libro que **tradujo**.
Sonia brought the book she translated.

¿Estuvieron en Italia y no me **trajeron** nada?
You were in Italy and you didn't bring me anything?

Take Note: Drop the 'i' from the ending 'eron'.

The 'I' Group

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Hacer > Hic | 3. Querer > Quis | 5. Predcir > Predij |
| 2. Venir > Vin | 4. Decir > Dij | |

¿Por qué no **viniste**?
Why didn't you come?

¿Sofía te **dijo** qué **hizo*** Jesús?
Did Sofía tell you what Jesús did?

Take Note: 'Hic' changes to 'hiz' for the 3rd person to maintain the pronunciation.



Ser & Ir Conjugations

The verbs 'ser' and 'ir' share the **same conjugations** in the preterite tense.

Person	Conjugation	Person	Conjugation
Yo	Fui*	Nosotros	Fuimos
Tú	Fuiste	Vosotros	Fuisteis
Él/Ella/Usted	Fue*	Ellos/Ellas/Uds	Fueron

¿A dónde **fuiste** ayer?
Where did you go yesterday?

La fiesta **fue** en mi casa.
The party was at my house.

Take Note: The first and third person singular use unique endings.



Time Markers

Due to the nature of the preterite, its markers indicate a clear beginning or ending, or they express that the action is complete.

Expression	Example
Ayer Yesterday	Ayer vi a Marta. <i>I saw Marta yesterday.</i>
Anoche Last night	¿A dónde fueron anoche ? <i>Where did you guys go last night?</i>
Ya Already	¿ Ya comiste? <i>Did you already eat?</i>
El año pasado Last year	Carlos se graduó el año pasado . <i>Carlos graduated last year.</i>
Hace + [amount of time] [time] + ago	¿Te mudaste hace un año ? <i>Did you move out a year ago?</i>

Take Note: Ayer me sentía mal.



Challenge

Create 5 sentences telling us about your last vacation or a funny or embarrassing moment:

- Where did you go
- What happened?
- What did you do

Resources

- YouTube Video Lessons:
 - [Spanish Preterite Tense: Learn to Talk about the Past](#)
 - [El Pretérito en Español: Aprende a Hablar del Pasado](#)
- [Spanish Preterite Tense: Guide to Uses, Rules & Conjugations](#)
- [Spanish Past Tenses 101: Preterite vs Imperfect](#)

