

VISUAL GUIDE LEVEL A2



PRETÉRITO IMPERFECTO

We use the pretérito imperfecto to talk about
habits, descriptions, states and actions in progress in the past.



1. WHEN DO WE USE IT?



Past habits
We talk about things we did repeatedly in the past.
When I **was** young, I **played** football every day.



Descriptions
We describe people, places, objects or situations.
The house **was** big and **had** a garden.



States and feelings
We describe how someone felt or what they thought.
I **was** tired.
I **didn't know** the answer.



Actions in progress
We describe an action that was happening.
At ten o'clock I **was sleeping**.
When you arrived, I **was studying**.

2. REGULAR VERBS

-AR
(hablar)

Person	Ending
yo	-aba
tú	-abas
él / ella / usted	-aba
nosotros/as	-ábamos
vosotros/as	-abais
ellos / ellas / ustedes	-aban

hablar → hablaba

-ER
(comer)

Person	Ending
yo	-ía
tú	-ías
él / ella / usted	-ía
nosotros/as	-íamos
vosotros/as	-íais
ellos / ellas / ustedes	-ían

comer → comía

-IR
(vivir)

Person	Ending
yo	-ía
tú	-ías
él / ella / usted	-ía
nosotros/as	-íamos
vosotros/as	-íais
ellos / ellas / ustedes	-ían

vivir → vivía



Verbs ending in **-ER** and **-IR** have the same endings.
Only the root of the verb changes.

3. ONLY 3 MAIN IRREGULARS

The imperfecto has only three main irregular verbs.



ser → era
yo era, tú eras, él era,
nosotros éramos,
vosotros erais, ellos eran



ir → iba
yo iba, tú ibas, él iba,
nosotros íbamos,
vosotros ibais, ellos iban



ver → veía
yo veía, tú veías, él veía,
nosotros veíamos,
vosotros veíais, ellos veían

4. COMMON TIME EXPRESSIONS

- before
- always
- normally
- generally
- often
- every day
- every week
- every summer
- when I was young
- when I was a child

5. IMPERFECT vs PRETERITE

What was it like?
→ **IMPERFECTO**

De pequeño **jugaba** al fútbol.
(When I was young, I used to play football.)

VS

What happened?
→ **PRETERITE**

Ayer **jugué** al fútbol.
(Yesterday, I played football.)

6. BACKGROUND + EVENT

We use the imperfecto for the background and the preterite for the events.

Yo **dormía**.
(I was sleeping.)



cuando el teléfono **sonó**.
(when the phone rang.)



7. QUICK REMINDER



HABITS
When I was young, I **studied** every day.



DESCRIPTIONS
My house **was** small but nice.



ACTIONS IN PROGRESS
At that time, I **was working** in a café.



FEELINGS
I **was** happy because we were on holiday.

REMEMBER



The imperfecto shows us the scene, and the preterite moves the story forward.

TIPS TO AVOID MISTAKES



Use imperfecto for habits and descriptions, not for completed one-time actions.



Don't forget the accent in **íbamos**, **veíamos**, etc.



Use **ser**, **ir** and **ver** with their irregular imperfect forms.



Pay attention to the meaning of the sentence, not just the expressions.



DOWNLOAD THE VISUAL GUIDE!

Review in a visual way how the pretérito imperfecto is formed and when we use it.



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