

PAST TENSE PRETERITE

USES

- 1. The preterit usually refers to a single completed action or state in the past.**

*Ayer fuimos al cine.
We went to the movies yesterday.*

*Mi padre leyó el periódico esta mañana.
My father read the newspaper this morning.*

- 2. The preterit can be specific and refer to the beginning or the ending of an action.**

*La fiesta comenzó a las siete y media pero no llegamos hasta las ocho.
The party began at seven thirty but we didn't arrive until eight.*

- 3. The only time the preterit is used to express a repeated action in the past is when the action is considered a single complete unit.**

*El mes pasado escribí cinco cartas a mi amigo Esteban.
Last month I wrote five letters to my friend Esteban.*

*La semana pasada mi hermana fue al gimnasio tres veces.
Last week my sister went to the gym three times.*

- 4. The preterit is also used to describe a chain of events in the past.**

*Llegué a casa, abrí la puerta, entré en la casa, fui a la sala y me senté en el sofá.
I arrived home, opened the door, entered the house, went to the living room and sat on the sofa.*

HOW TO CONJUGATE

Regular verbs

The Preterite of regular verbs in Spanish is formed by adding specific endings to the stem of the verb.

Replace the -AR, -ER, or -IR ending from the infinitive form of the verb and add the appropriate ending.

-AR ENDING VERBS

yo	-é	nosotros	-amos
tú	-aste	vosotros	-asteis
él/ella		ellos/ellas	
usted	-ó	ustedes	-aron

-ER -IR ENDIGN VERBS

yo	-í	nosotros	-imos
tú	-iste	vosotros	-isteis
él/ella		ellos/ellas	
usted	-ió	ustedes	-ieron

Examples of Regular Verbs in the Simple Past Tense:

HABLAR (TO SPEAK)
 COMPRAR (TO BUY)
 BAILAR (TO DANCE)
 CAMINAR (TO WALK)
 COCINAR (TO COOK)

ENSEÑAR (TO TEACH)
 CANTAR (TO SING)
 LLAMAR (TO CALL)
 ESTUDIAR (TO STUDY)
 MIRAR (TO SEE)

HABLAR/ to talk

Yo	• hablé	(I spoke)
tú	• hablaste	(you spoke)
el/ella/usted	• habló	(he/she/you spoke)
nosotros	• hablamos	(we spoke)
vosotros	• hablasteis	(you all spoke)
ellos/ellas/uds	• hablaron	(they/you all spoke)

COMER/to eat

Yo	• comí	(I ate)
tú	• comiste	(you ate)
el/ella/usted	• comió	(he/she/you ate)
nosotros	• comimos	(we ate)
vosotros	• comisteis	(you all ate)
ellos/ellas/uds	• comieron	(they/you all ate)

VIVIR/ to live

Yo	• viví	(I lived)
tú	• viviste	(you lived)
el/ella/usted	• vivió	(he/she/you lived)
nosotros	• vivimos	(we lived)
vosotros	• vivisteis	(you all lived)
ellos/ellas/uds	• vivieron	(they/you all lived)

Irregular verbs

In the preterit tense some very common verbs have an irregular stem. Therefore its conjugation must be memorized.

Verb	ANDAR /to go
Irregular stem	Anduv-
Conjugation	• yo —→ anduve • tú —→ anduviste • el/ella usted —→ anduvo • nosotros —→ anduvimos • vosotros —→ anduvisteis • ellos/ellas ustedes —→ anduvieron

Verb	ESTAR /to be
Irregular stem	Estuv- (I HAVE BEEN)
Conjugation	• yo —→ estuve • tú —→ estuviste • el/ella usted —→ estuvo • nosotros —→ estuvimos • vosotros —→ estuvisteis • ellos/ellas ustedes —→ estuvieron

Verb	TENER /to have
Irregular stem	Tuv- <i>(I HAD)</i>
Conjugation	- yo → tuve - tú → tuviste - el/ella usted → tuvo - nosotros → tuvimos - vosotros → tuvisteis - ellos/ellas ustedes → tuvieron

SER and IR

The conjugations of these verbs are exactly the same, but its meaning is different.

ser – to be

yo	fuí
tú	fuiste
el/ella	fué
nosotros	fuimos
vosotros	fuisteis
ellos/ellas	fueron

ir- to go

yo	fuí
tú	fuiste
el/ella	fué
nosotros	fuimos
vosotros	fuisteis
ellos/ellas	fueron

-El examen de español **fué** muy difícil.
The Spanish exam was really difficult.

-Ayer **fuí** a una fiesta.
I went to a party yesterday.