

PAST TENSE (IMPERFECT)

In Spanish there are two past tenses. You've already learned the preterite tense. This chapter we will learn the other past tense – the imperfect. The endings for this tense are easy so your real challenge will be deciding when to use the imperfect and when to use the preterite.

The imperfect endings are;

-AR VERBS

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

-ER & IR VERBS

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

Examples;

Mirar – to watch

Miraba	Mirábamos
Mirabas	Mirabais
Miraba	Miraban

Comer – to eat

Comía	Comíamos
Comías	Comíais
Comía	Comían

When deciding whether to use the imperfect or the preterite, follow these basic guidelines until we discuss it in more detail.

Use the PRETERITE for;

Completed actions

Use the IMPERFECT for;

Actions that were ongoing, but are now completed.

The imperfect tense has no stem-changing verbs and only has 3 irregular verbs.

SER – TO BE (WAS/WERE)

Era	Éramos
Eras	Erais
Era	Eran

IR – TO GO (WENT)

Iba	Íbamos
Ibas	Ibais
Iba	Iban

VER – TO SEE (SAW)

Veía	Veíamos
Veías	Veíais
Veía	Veían