Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Clase: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**El pretérito contra el imperfecto**

The preterite and imperfect are the two simple past tenses in the indicative mood. Both tenses refer to actions, situations, and events in the past, but there are specific meanings and uses for each.

When narrating in the past, there are completed actions for which the preterite is used, and ongoing, repeated, and habitual actions for which the imperfect is used. Thus, when a story is told in the past tense, there is generally a combination of ***actions (preterite)***with a ***description and background information (imperfect)*.**

Note the contrast between the meanings and uses for the imperfect and preterite:

Meanings: ***PRETÉRITO IMPERFECTO***

**hablé**  **hablaba**

I spoke I was speaking

I did speak I used to speak

I would (always) speak

I spoke (repeatedly)

**Vocabulario útil para el imperfecto:**

**a menudo de vez en cuando tantas veces**

often from time to time so many times

**a veces frecuentemente muchas veces**

sometimes, at times frequently all the time

**cada día (año, mes, noche, etc.) mientras todo el tiempo**

every day (year, month, night, etc.) while (simultaneous actions) all the time

**con frecuencia nunca todo el día**

frequently, often never all day long

**cuando (except for interruptions) siempre todos los días**

when always every day

**Vocabulario útil para el pretérito:**

**ayer durante dos siglos esta (mañana/tarde)**   
yesterday for two centuries this morning/afternoon  
**ayer por la mañana el (año/mes) pasado el fin de semana pasado**   
yesterday morning last year/month last weekend  
**ayer por la tarde el lunes por la (mañana/tarde/noche) la semana pasada**  
yesterday afternoon Monday morning/afternoon/night last week  
**anteayer el otro día durante**  
the day before yesterday the other day during  
**anoche en ese momento de repente**  
last night at that momento all of a sudden  
**desde el primer momento entonces por (periódo de tiempo)**

from the first moment then for (duration of time)

**después hace dos (días/semanas/meses/años)**

afterwards two (days/weeks/months/years) ago

**Los usos del imperfecto y del pretérito**

**Imperfecto**

Background information without a time frame or before an interruption

* **Fecha** - date
* **Hora** – time (on a clock)
* **Tiempo** - weather
* **Lugar** - location
* **Descripción** – physical descriptions, background info
* **Emoción** – state of being, feelings
* **Ongoing action** – unspecified amount of time
* **Habitual or repeated action**
* **Simultaneous actions** – actions occurring at the same time but are considered background information

**Pretérito**

* **One time** – singular, completed action
* **Interruption –** action that interrupts background information
* **Series** - completed action in a series of actions
* **Duration** - action completed with a known duration of time
* **Number of times** - action completed with known number of times completed
* **Beginning -** known time when an action began
* **End –** known time when an action ended