

Unidad 13

Resumen gramatical 13-1 Narrating in the past: preterite and imperfect

- Now that you have learned about the preterite and the imperfect, you will learn more how to use each tense to narrate in the past.
- Compare main differences between the preterite and the imperfect:

Preterite	Imperfect
<p>1. Talks about actions that happened at specific times. What's important in these cases is that the action happened at a specific moment in the past and is considered complete.</p> <p>Cuando llegué al dormitorio, preparé el almuerzo.</p> <p><i>When I arrived at the dorm, I prepared lunch.</i></p>	<p>1. Describes a state, an action, or event with no specific beginning or end mentioned. What's important is the action itself, not when it happened or when it started or stopped.</p> <p>El padre sostenía a la niña sobre el agua mientras las olas besaban sus piecitos suavemente.</p> <p><i>The father held the little girl up over the water as the waves gently kissed her little feet.</i></p>
<p>2. Expresses beginning or end of a past action.</p> <p>La clase comenzó a las ocho de la mañana.</p> <p><i>Class started at 8 in the morning.</i></p>	<p>2. Refers to repeated or habitual actions in the past.</p> <p>El profesor Mendel siempre traía a la clase videos y enlaces interesantes.</p> <p><i>Professor Mendel always brought interesting videos and links to class.</i></p>
<p>3. Narrates a series of consecutive actions in the past.</p> <p>Entró, se sacó rápido los zapatos y se fue a dormir sin comer.</p> <p><i>He came in, took off his shoes quickly, and went to sleep without eating.</i></p>	<p>3. Describes emotions or characteristics in the past.</p> <p>Me sentía mal. Las lágrimas rodaban por mis mejillas.</p> <p><i>I felt bad. Tears were rolling down my cheeks.</i></p>

- Compare how the preterite and the imperfect are used together in the narration.

The imperfect sets the scene and provides a description without focusing on when those actions began or ended. But the action(s) that take place in the scene are expressed in the preterite.

Cuando **llegué** a la casa después del juramento **había** globos azules, rojos y blancos.

When I arrived at the house after the oath, there were blue, red, and white balloons.