

ing/End vs.

al

ng of an action is usually with the preterite: *Empezó* comenzaron el ejercicio. An exception is: *Isabel* ejercicio cuando su tró.

of Completed vs. Background

ns

difference in meaning of thought, it occurred to pensaba (he was of the planned/intended to). Use ns in a similar contrast. ents these additional

fue al médico ayer. / Carlos pre iba al médico cuando escribía.

estuvo (became) nerviosa. nita estaba (was) nerviosa.

Beginning/End vs. Habitual

Use the preterite to . . .

- tell about the beginning or the end of a past action

El sábado pasado, el partido de fútbol **empezó** a la una. **Terminó** a las cuatro. El entrenador **habló** a las cinco.

Last Saturday, the soccer game began at one. It ended at four. The coach spoke (began to speak) at five.

Use the imperfect to . . .

- talk about the habitual nature of an action (something you always did)

Había un partido todos los sábados. Muchas personas **jugaban** todas las semanas.

There was a game every Saturday. Many people played every week.

Completed vs. Ongoing

Use the preterite to . . .

- express an action that is viewed as completed

El partido **duró** tres horas. **Ganaron** Los Lobos, de Villalegre.

The game lasted three hours. The Lobos of Villalegre won.

Use the imperfect to . . .

- tell what was happening when another action took place and tell about simultaneous events (with **mientras** = while)

Yo no vi el final del partido. **Estaba** en la cocina cuando **terminó**.

I didn't see the end of the game. I was in the kitchen when it ended.

Mientras mi amigo **veía** el partido, **hablaba** con su novia.

While my friend was watching the game, he was talking with his girlfriend.

Series of Completed Actions vs. Background

Use the preterite to . . .

- express a series of completed actions

Durante el partido, los jugadores **corrieron**, **saltaron** y **gritaron**.

During the game, the players ran, jumped, and shouted.

Resources: Transparency 56 from *Capítulo 7* can be used to practice preterite vs. imperfect.

Anime
entre

Juan

o

Juan

p

Use the imperfect to ...

- give background details of many kinds: time, location, weather, mood, age, physical and mental characteristics

Llovía un poco durante el partido. Todos los jugadores eran jóvenes; tenían 17 ó 18 años. ¡Y todos esperaban ganar!

It rained a little bit during the game. All the players were young; they were 17 or 18 years old. And all of them hoped to win!

Changes in M

Suggestions

- Model sentences with the imperfect and the imperfect of *poder*, and *querer* and ask students explain the meaning.

- Read the following discussion of the pre-imperfect in Spanish.

Estos dos tiempos de verbo tienen significados muy diferentes de uno al otro. Por ejemplo, «Cuando mi tío salió de casa ayer por la mañana», yo entiendo que mi tío solamente una vez. Si Ud. dice: «Cuando mi tío salió de casa ayer por la mañana», entiendo que mi tío con cierta frecuencia habla de algo rutinario en todas sus visitas. Estas oraciones son correctas, pero sólo Ud. sabe cuál comunica la «verdad». Dice, «Ayer por la tarde», su oyente entenderá que ayer pasó mientras iban. No lo va a interrumpir para comentarlo. En cambio, si dice: «Ayer fuimos a la tienda», su oyente puede interrumpirlo con una pregunta porque él va a creer que acaba una parte de la historia. Otra vez, las dos oraciones son correctas. El uso del pretérito depende de lo que Ud. quiere expresar.

Changes in Meaning

Remember that, when used in the preterite, **saber**, **conocer**, **querer**, and **poder** have English equivalents different from that of the infinitives (see Capítulo 8). In the imperfect, the English equivalents of these verbs do not differ from the infinitive meanings.

Anoche conocí a Roberto.

Last night I met Roberto.

¿Anoche? Yo pensaba que ya lo conocías.

Last night? I thought you already knew him.

Pret. ↗

Interrupting vs. Interrupted ↗ Imp.

The preterite and the imperfect frequently occur in the same sentence. In the first sentence the imperfect tells what was happening when another action—conveyed by the preterite—broke the continuity of the ongoing activity. In the second sentence, the preterite reports the action that took place because of a condition—described by the imperfect—that was in progress or in existence at that time.

Miguel estudiaba cuando sonó el teléfono.

Miguel was studying when the phone rang.

Olivia comió tanto porque tenía mucha hambre.

Olivia ate so much because she was very hungry.

Action vs. the Stage (Background)/Conditions/Ongoing

The preterite and imperfect are also used together in the presentation of an event. The preterite narrates the action while the imperfect sets the stage, describes the conditions that caused the action, or emphasizes the continuing nature of a particular action.

Era un día hermoso. Hacía mucho sol pero no hacía mucho calor. Como no tenía que trabajar en la oficina, compré unas flores de primavera y salí vestida de camiseta y pantalones cortos para trabajar todo el día en el jardín.

It was a beautiful day. It was very sunny but it wasn't very hot. Since I didn't have to work in the office, I bought some spring flowers and I went out dressed in a T-shirt and shorts to work in the garden all day.



Heritage Speakers

Anime a los hispanohablantes a explicar la diferencia entre los siguientes pares de oraciones.

Juan me dijo que le dolía la cabeza. [indefinite period of time, perhaps continuing into present]

Juan me dijo que le dolió la cabeza. [a specific time period that is now over]

No sé cuánto costó. [implies someone made a purchase, but speaker does not know how much it cost that person]

No se cuánto costaba. [no purchase implied]